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Minister Éamon Ó Cuív with Don Crowley, Chairman of IRD Duhallo and Maura Walsh, Manager, at the signing of the new LEADER Programme.

Chairman's Address

Twenty years ago a group of Duhallow businessmen with vision and determination set up IRD Duhallow to address the serious economic and demographic decline which was continuing unchecked. Their belief was that the Duhallow people would have to come together to do things for themselves. They raised money locally and during this fund raising campaign promised to bring in £3 from outside for every £1 raised locally.

Jerry Sheehan of Avonmore Electrical and the late John Ronan (R.I.P.) of Ronan Daly Jermyn shared a passion for angling and during the hours spent on the Blackwater finalised their plans for IRD Duhallow, selecting carefully the others to join them, taking care to get representatives from all over Duhallow who had business acumen and "a constituency" such as Farming, Sport, Community, the Local Authorities and Co-Ops. Thus IRD Duhallow was born in November 1989 and as they say the rest is history.

Looking back over that period there is no doubt that the organisation under successive chairmen has served the Duhallow Region well. The return on investment promised by Jerry Sheehan has far exceeded their expectations and IRD Duhallow has evolved as a Local Community based organisation which delivers not only economic targets but Social, Cultural and Environmental as well. It encompasses and has the support of over thirty three geographically based communities and over sixty issue based groups from youth to women, lone parents, mental health, sporting, educational, cultural and environmental groups.

As a Board we are proud of our reputation in Ireland and in Europe. We have built strong partnerships with Statutory Agencies and Government Departments through successive Governments. This reputation has been earned because any government policy entrusted to us has been delivered locally with minimum bureaucracy and maximum impact and value for money.

The past year has seen the roll-out of the new LEADER programme which alone will deliver over €10 million to the Duhallow area up to 2013. IRD Duhallow made a successful application by way of a comprehensive strategic plan which was completely developed in-house, and in January we signed the new contracts with the Minister. Our strategic overview for the area is again based on the four pillars of Human, Economic, Cultural and Environmental capital to build sustainable communities in a living countryside that fosters creativity and improves quality of life. The current economic climate has had a devastating effect on Duhallow with the numbers signing-on at Newmarket social welfare office increasing by 300% as well as others. IRD Duhallow's Services to the Unemployed measure sees the organisation provide supports which are outlined in this report.

There are further problems associated with the economic downturn in an area like Duhallow. Many feel the effects of rural isolation and in this regard the organisation works with community groups to develop a strong social infrastructure. Last October at our seminar on Tackling Rural Isolation, in honour of local Legion of Mary Missionary, Edel Quinn, we launched a report entitled 'The Needs of Older People in Duhallow' which highlights the high level of isolation experienced by people in the area. IRD Duhallow has a range of measures to help tackle this isolation including DART which will carry over 50,000 passengers, The Duhallow Rural Meal Service which will deliver over 20,000 meals throughout Duhallow and a Warmer Homes Programme which will insulate up to 1,000 houses of those in fuel poverty this year.

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) allows us offer support to Community Based Youth Initiatives, the Unemployed and Community Development. It also allows us fund the afterschools activities in Boherbue Comprehensive School, Coláiste Treasa, Scoil Mhuire and Rathmore Secondary School. We also provide educational services for children with Dyslexia here in the James O'Keeffe Institute as well as in the schools. Through the many Working Groups which



report to the Board, we gain from the experience of local community volunteers and staff from numerous agencies who can inform our decisions and help guide the organisation in planning for future initiatives. The willingness of people to give their time voluntarily continues to impress me.

I wish our new Board members the very best for their term. Sheila Crowley and John Kirwan represent South Eastern Duhallow. Both are very active in their own communities and I am sure they will work hard for all communities in the Duhallow region. The Board is delighted to welcome Jack Roche as representative of the SAOI Network of active retired groups. John Linehan (IFA) joins the Board representing the Farming Pillar in the seat I am vacating. He joins Conor Creedon (ICMSA) and as both are young farmers working family holdings,

I have no doubt they will inform the Boards strategies as to how best this crucial sector can be supported into the future. Following the Local Elections the Board has two newly appointed Local Authority Representatives, John Sheehan and Marie Moloney from Kerry County Council. We will be joined by two Local Authority elected members from Cork County Council shortly and a representative of the Environmental Pillar at the behest of the Minister and we welcome their input.

I would like to thank our LEADER inspector, Breda Dooley, and our LDSIP Liaison Officer, Padraig de Burca, for their support and advice to the Board and staff on an ongoing basis.

I wish to thank Michael Twohig, Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee, for his diligence in leading their work every month, and the Chairs and members of all of our working groups for continuing to unselfishly give their time and experience to help IRD Duhallow successfully deliver the programmes it administers in the area.

I would like to sincerely thank Judy O'Leary, the Vice-Chair, for all her help and assistance over the past three years and for being so willing to represent the organisation and Duhallow at many local and national events. My thanks to all Board Members for the giving of your time and experience voluntarily and for the support you have given.

Our Manager, Maura Walsh, continues to make a huge commitment not only to the organisation but to Duhallow. I would like to thank her for her hard work and dedication in managing the organisation and also for her help and support to me as Chairman and as a Board member since 2001.

Thank you also to all the staff for their commitment to their work and for the transparency they always afford the Board.

This is the end of my term as Chairman and indeed as a Board Member of IRD Duhallow. Following the new rules introduced by the Minister last year, it is no longer possible for the former Chairperson to stay on the Board. While IRD Duhallow always had a policy of rotating board members it always appreciated the willingness of former Chairpersons to stay on as co-opted members so that their experience could be passed on. In an era when so many scandals are hitting the headlines I am proud to say that IRD Duhallow has always had positive audits and inspections by Department staff, and value for money and compliance are key principles of the Board and staff.

I have had a very enjoyable and satisfying time on the Board over the last eight years. There is no doubt but it was hard work at times considering it is a voluntary activity but then again all the other Board Members do so on the same voluntary basis. It has been my pleasure to work with so many conscientious people genuinely dedicated to making Duhallow a better place to live. I am delighted to have been a part of all that has been delivered in the last eight years and wish the organisation every success in the future.

Don Crowley
CHAIRMAN

Manager's Report

In this the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the organisation, IRD Duhallow is facing perhaps the most challenging year since its foundation.

Looking back now to when I joined the company in 1991 the National Economic landscape has changed utterly. The Celtic Tiger years have gone no doubt, but that tiger never quite got as far as Duhallow. The multiple holidays, SUV's and vast speculative building developments never materialised for the region so I'm not sure we will miss the tiger that much. What has happened over that time though, is that a range of Government Funded Social Supports have been put in place to tackle rural isolation, improve the quality of life and increase the life chances of Duhallow people, in particular the elderly and our young people.

IRD Duhallow through its strong roots, that have taken hold throughout the region, has effectively implemented a range of supports and activities which touch the lives of practically every person living in the area. It has been able to do this because of the EU and Government funding it has accessed. More importantly it has been able to achieve a range of 'supports' that are totally relevant to the area and delivered in such a cost effective manner that would be impossible for central or even Local Government to achieve. The reason for its success can be summarised as follows; a Voluntary Board that works tirelessly and selflessly for the entire region. A board that is open to taking on new challenges and which allows a range of Working Groups to get involved in the delivery of its aims and targets; a Board which is not fixed but has enough fresh blood coupled with long term experience to gain the confidence, trust and support of its communities and businesses.

IRD Duhallow has also had the ability to attract highly qualified ambitious young people to its staff. They have total confidence in the company structures so that when the winds of change come they merely adjust their sails and keep the company on course. The blue print used by Working Groups and Staff is the Strategic Plan, which is relevant to the Duhallow Region because it has been developed by listening carefully to several sectors of the Community.

As we go to print, the Report of "An Bord Snip Nua" has just been published with several recommended actions for cut backs in rural areas including the abolition of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. This is a relatively new Department which for the first time in the history of the state put a focus on Rural Issues, which before that was a mere add on in a number of other Departments. Several wide reaching achievements can be attributed to this Department such as the Rural Social Scheme which many would agree has done more to sustain small rural farm families than more costly schemes. The Rural Transport Initiative and the Community Services Programme which supports the more vulnerable to get work locally and provides essential services such as the Rural Meals Service and the Warmer Homes Scheme which are other initiatives of this Rural Affairs Department. A cost benefit analysis carried out nationally and independently shows that for every €1 of investment in the Rural Social Scheme Warmer Homes measure the Government got over €4 in return. Rather than cut Social Welfare rates perhaps the government might look at increasing numbers on the Rural Social Scheme and indeed put a parallel scheme in place for non farmers along similar lines.



Removing the Rural Meal Service may save in the short term but if the results of the Cost Benefit Analysis hold true, for every €1 saved on meals in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, over €4 in costs would hit the Departments of Health and Social and Family Affairs. It is indeed a foolish man that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing!

Duhallow has shown tremendous resilience in the face of a falling population with many areas left almost denuded of people. The 2006 Census showed the first signs of hope that this terrible trend could be reversed; let us hope that the strides made by these communities can be allowed to continue.

In conclusion I want to thank sincerely the members of the Board who give so generously their time and expertise and above all encouragement to staff and communities. In particular I want to thank the outgoing Chairman Don Crowley who as the Macra na Feirme representative was one of the youngest Chairs in the country. It is regrettable that we must lose his expertise from the Board but I hope he will continue to serve on some of our Working Groups. Likewise Billy Murphy leaves the board after dedicated service but will take a seat on the Project Evaluation Committee. Marie "the Shamrock" Murphy leaves the Local Authority seat and Cliona Browne retired from the Community Sector and their motherly good nature will also be missed around the Board table. Kitty O'Mahony retires as the Carers Representative but not before putting the plight of home carers, who contribute so much and save the state millions each year, firmly on the IRD Duhallow agenda.

I am taking this opportunity to thank our Team Leaders Eileen Linehan and Catherine Crowley who lead by example and are responsible for the smooth management and many of the achievements of the company. The dedication and productivity of the staff has been tested and retested, with pay freezes and withholding of increments due this year. They have all rowed in and have ensured that all our services have not only continued but grown during the year. Derval Corbett continues to support the HR function while Marie Fleming ensures the maintenance of our Excellence Through People Standard and Marie O'Riordan co-ordinated the production of this report again this year.

It should also be noted that with the budget cut backs to administration, Pobal asked that no Social Inclusion or Rural Transport funds be used to produce Reports. The Board of IRD Duhallow made the courageous decision to put private funds in place so that this Progress Report could be produced to acknowledge the work done, the support of our funders, public and private and to encourage Communities and Business people to develop projects for the betterment of Duhallow.

Although turbulent times lie ahead I have no doubt that this organisation which is deeply rooted in our Communities with branches that reach out to every corner and person in Duhallow is flexible enough to continue its vital work on behalf of the Government and European Commission.

Maura Walsh
MANAGER

IRD Duhallow Ltd. Company Structure

IRD Duhallow is a company limited by guarantee without share capital. It has charitable status and our directors are voluntary and receive no remuneration for their contribution.

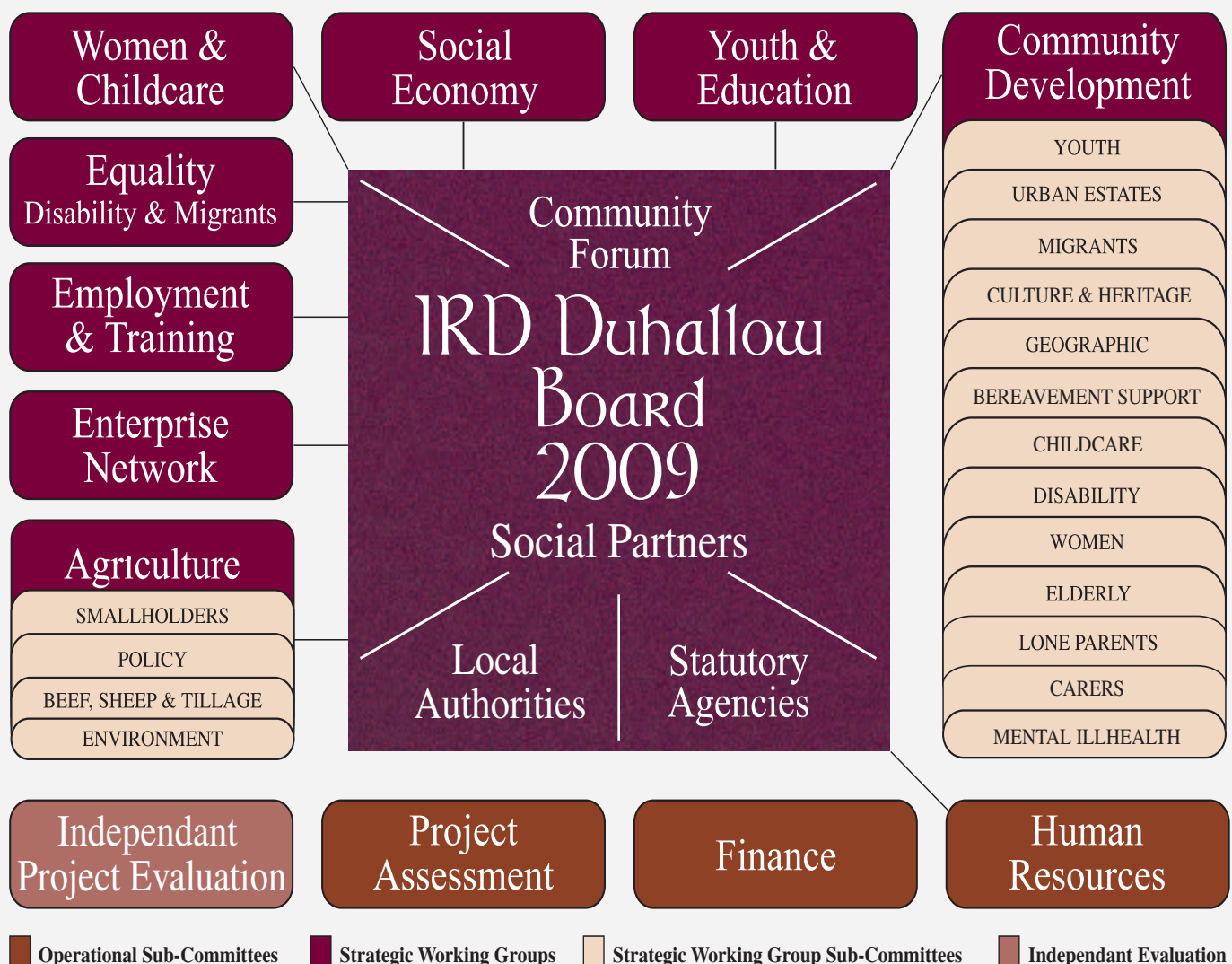
Last year, during the cohesion process the government developed a new template for the Memorandum and Articles as well as provisions for membership of the Local Development Companies. In June this year we were notified that the Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs has authorised an addendum to the October 2007 Governance Guidelines. This addendum reflects the Ministers decision to increase the membership of companies to accommodate representation from the Environmental Pillar in Social Partnership, the creation of which was approved by the Government in April 2009.

This change will bring the total number of Board Members on the IRD Duhallow Board of Directors to 24 with 5 Local

Government Representatives, 5 National Social Partners, 8 Community & Voluntary and 6 Statutory Sector Representatives.

IRD Duhallow's Board Structure was developed so as to maximise the bottom up approach to development. We have a number of working groups with representatives from our Board and staff as well as community and state sector representatives. This structure allows us to target specific expertise beneficial to the implementation of the strategic aims of the particular working group.

IRD Duhallow continues to strive for excellence through the ongoing training and development of our staff. We have maintained the FAS Excellence Through People Standard, Ireland's standard for Human Resource Management.



IRD Duhallow Board Members

COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST AND COMMUNITY FORUM

Cormac Collins

Cormac is from Gneeveguilla Co Kerry and was appointed Representative of Western Duhallow Communities. He is Chairman of Gneeveguilla Community Council, whose comprehensive local development plan has won support from Kerry County Council, CLAR and LEADER. The community has erected a monument to the several local poets, writers and musicians of national renown and won an Arts and Culture award from Kerry Community Awards. He serves on the Community Development Working Group. Cormac is Tralee Area Manager of the ESB Networks.



Hannah Kelleher

Hannah is from Cullen and was elected to represent Western Duhallow on the Board in June 2008. A national School Teacher, she was appointed Principal of Cullen Primary School in 2004. She is a member of the Board of Rathmore Credit Union and is actively involved in the annual Cullen Feis. She is Vice-Chair of our Youth and Education Working Group and sits on the Community Development Working Group. Hannah has a keen interest in culture and heritage and promotes pride of place locally and nationally.



Elaine White

Elaine was elected on to the board in 2007 to represent the North Eastern Community Forum. Elaine is a native of Castlemagner and is an active member of the Castlemagner Musical Society of which she has supported the organisation of and also participated in a number of community musicals and pageants. She is also a member of the Castlemagner Development Association which erected a monument to one of the Mná Duhallow, Edel Quinn. Elaine serves on the Community Development and Employment and Training Working Groups.



Pat Keane

Pat represents the North Eastern Duhallow Community Forum and was re-elected for a three-year term in 2007. He is Chair of the Project Assessment Working Group and is also a member of the Community Development and the Agriculture Working Groups. Pat is very active in his local community of Freemount. He is a founder member of the Duhallow Beekeepers Association where he promotes training, marketing and promotion of their unique artisan food product. Pat is retired from Golden Vale Co-op.



John Kirwan

John is from Banteer and has over 30 years experience working in the voluntary sector. He was elected to the Board this year to represent Communities in South Eastern Duhallow and will join the Community Development Working Group. He is Chairperson of Banteer Community Childcare Services and an active member of Banteer, Lyre and Districts Community Council. He is a founder member of Banteer Youth Club. John is employed by the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform and is based in Cork.



Sheila Crowley

Sheila was elected to the Board of IRD Duhallow in June 2009 to represent the South Eastern Duhallow Region. She is in her third year as secretary of Laharn Community Action Group and has worked diligently with the Group to transform the Old School House at Laharn in to a newly refurbished Culture and Heritage Centre. Sheila is a chef by profession and is proprietor of Ard Na Coill Bed & Breakfast in Laharn, situated on the Duhallow Way walking route. She will sit on our Community Development Working Group.



Judy O'Leary

Judy O'Leary is Vice Chairperson of the Board having been re-elected in 2008. She chairs the Women and Childcare Working Group and is a member of the Human Resources Working Group. Judy is a founder member of the Duhallow Women's Forum. She is actively involved with the Irish Country Women's Association and is An Grianán Teachta of the Cork Federation (ICA Adult Education College). She is also Secretary of the National Consumer Committee of ICA and an Information Officer.



Jack Roche

Jack is from Rockchapel and represented Siabh Luachra's cultural interests on the Board until he stepped down in 2008. He was re-appointed this year on foot of his election by SAOI, the Network of actively retired groups. He sits on the Social Economy and Community Development Working Groups. He is Chairman of IRD Duhallow's Agriculture Working Group and represents IRD Duhallow on Kerry Community Transport and Comhar LEADER na hÉireann. Jack represents CLE on ELARD the European Association for Rural Development of which he is a past President. He sits on the Rural Development Forum.



IRD Duhallow Board Members

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

Michael Twohig

Michael is a founder member of IRD Duhallow and served as Finance Director until he stepped down in 1996. He was reappointed to the Board in 2007 representing Kanturk Chamber of Commerce. Along with his wife Noreen he manages the family owned Supervalu Stores in Kanturk & Abbeyfeale. A keen angler, he has developed a number of angling projects in Duhallow. Michael is an active member of the Enterprise Working Group and was elected Chair of the Finance Sub Committee last year.



Conor Creedon

Conor was appointed to the Board in 2007 as a second representative of the farming sector. He is a member of the ICMSA (Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association) and participates on its Administrative Committee and is Chairman of its Farm Services & Environment Committee. Conor is a dairy farmer who along with his wife Elisha manages the family farm in Rathmore, Co Kerry. He is an active member of IRD Duhallow's Agriculture Working Group and is the Boards Representative on Kerry County Development Board.



John Cooney

John represents the Trade Union Movement on the Board of IRD Duhallow. He has served as an official with SIPTU, the Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union. John is based at the Mallow Office where he is a Branch Organiser. He has been an active member of IRD Duhallow's Employment and raining Working Group for the past number of years.



John Linehan

John, a full time Dairy Farmer from Dromtariffe was elected on to the Board in July 2009 as a representative of the farming sector. John, who is married to Angela, has a diploma in Rural Development. He is Chairman of Dromtariffe IFA and is an active member of Duhallow IFA and the IRD Duhallow Focal Farmer Programme. He is also the Secretary of Dromtariffe Community Centre and sits on our Agriculture Working Group.



John Sheahan

John was re-elected to Kerry County Council this year and was re-appointed to the Board of IRD Duhallow. He is an active member of his local community in Killarney. John is a member of the Regional Health Forum South, The Community, Culture and Tourism Strategic Policy Committee and Rural Water Committee of Kerry County Council, Joint Policing Committee and Kerry Education Service.



Marie Moloney

Marie Moloney was elected to Kerry County Council in June 2009 and subsequently nominated to the Board of IRD Duhallow. As secretary to former T.D. Breeda Moynihan Cronin for over 15 years, she has worked with local communities and knows the area well. Marie is also on the Board of South Kerry Development Partnership, Kerry Education Services, the Health Services Executive and Rural Water Committee.



IRD Duhallow Board Members

STATUTORY FORUM

Suzanne Campion

Suzanne Campion represents the Southern Regional Fisheries Board where she is Assistant CEO. She is a member of the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly's Agriculture and Rural Development Sub-Committee, the County Waterford Heritage Forum and the Regional Working Group of Midland Regional Authority's Water Tour project. Suzanne has worked as a manager and accountant in the public and private sectors. She is involved in the management, protection, development and conservation of the rivers and their habitats in the Region.



Michael Manning

Michael was re-appointed to the Board in 2008. He is Chair of the Human Resources Working Group and a member of the Project Assessment Working Group. Michael's presence on the Board ensures the development of sustainable tourism strategies for the Duhallow Region. He lends the expertise to encourage the growth of tourism in the Region while promoting the highest standards in tourism products. As chair of the HR Working Group he has overseen IRD Duhallow achieve and maintain the Excellence Through People Standard.



Michael Doyle

Michael was re-appointed to the board in 2008 representing Coillte. He is Chair of the Equality, Disability & Migrants Working Group and is a member of the Project Assessment Working Group. He represents IRD Duhallow on the Cork County Development Board and the Cork Sports Partnership Board. He also represents the Board of IRD Duhallow on several National Fora dealing with Equality and Integration. Michael liaises with the Sports Council of Ireland and the National Trails Committee on the development and maintenance of long distance and looped walks.



Jerry Donovan

Jerry was re-appointed to the Board in 2007 and represents Teagasc, the National Farm Advisory Service. His presence on the Board ensures complementarity between the two organisations in our advice and supports to the agricultural sector. Jerry is a member of the Agriculture Working Group which is responsible for the rollout of our Focal Farmer Programme which provides supports to Smallholder Families in the region. Jerry is also a member of the Board of Kanturk Credit Union.



John Breen

John Breen joined the Board of IRD Duhallow in September 2008, as a nominee of the Kerry County Manager, Mr. Tom Curran. John holds the position of Director of Services, Housing & Social Support and Community and Enterprise. He is also Killarney Town Manager. John has previously worked in Dublin and Limerick City Council and Tralee Town Council.



Tom Stritch

Tom Stritch is an engineer and joined the Board of IRD Duhallow in July 2008 as the nominee of the Cork County Manager, Martin Riordan. Tom holds the position of Director of Services for the Northern Division of Cork County Council with responsibility for the management of services including; housing, roads, water, waste, litter, recreation, and amenities, delivered through Divisional offices in Mallow and Area offices in Charleville, Kanturk, Millstreet and Newmarket.



Details of Staff



EILEEN LINEHAN, B.A. (Econ & Geog), MBS (Business Economics), Dip. Personnel Mng.

With eight years experience in Rural Development, Eileen was appointed Community Development Team Leader in 2006 having previously managed the Enterprise Team and has responsibility for the LDSIP & LEADER Programmes. She prepares the Programme of Activities and oversees the financial operations of RSS, FAS CE, Warmer Homes, NCIP and all project budgets. Eileen monitors the progress of the programmes through the SCOPE & LEADER performance monitoring systems and represents Community Partnerships on the Cork County Childcare Committee and Pobal's Pension Board.



MARGARET O'CONNOR, MAAT, AIPA

With twelve years service, Margaret is the Senior Accounts Administrator with IRD Duhallow. She is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the company's financial systems and procedures and the implementation of the apportionment of overheads across the various programmes delivered including LEADER and LDSIP. She also oversees the Payroll and Pension administration and prepares Financial Reports for Management and the Board of Directors.



KATIE CROWLEY, B.B.S. Dip in Food Mkt & Rural Dev & Co-ops, Cert in Agri.

Katie joined IRD Duhallow in 2007. She is responsible for the Agri Tourism measure of LEADER, the Focal Farmer Programme and supports the work of the Agriculture Working Group. Through a range of innovative initiatives the Focal Farmer Programme assists over 300 farm families in Duhallow. Katie actively promotes participation on the Rural Social Scheme, provides one to one supports, helps farmers develop tourism plans and organises various training programmes throughout the year.



KASIA MELLER, MA in Political Science

Kasia, originally from Napole, a village in Central Poland, was appointed Accounts Officer in March 2007. In January 2008, Kasia took over as Finance Officer on the Community Development Team. She is responsible for the preparation of weekly and monthly wages and accounts for RSS, Warmer Homes, FÁS CE, Out of school, Dormant Accounts Fund (Carers) and the James O'Keeffe Institute, financial reports for the Social Economy Working Group and the Board as well as Pobal.



PETER DESMOND, B Comm, MSc Food Mgt, Rural Development and Co-ops

Peter joined IRD Duhallow in October 2008 as Youth and Community Development Officer for Western Duhallow. Peter works in animation and capacity building with the communities and through LEADER funding assists them to develop high quality local services and amenities. Peter also supports the work of the Youth and Education Working Group. He is staff officer for the Duhallow Carers Support Group, the SAOI Network and the Dyslexia Support Group.



MARIE FLEMING, Diploma in Business Skills, PR and Marketing.

Marie joined IRD Duhallow in May 2006 as Clerical Officer. In addition to dealing with general queries in the front office she provides administrative assistance to the Development Officers and supports the Managers participation on a number of National Fora. Marie also provides the administrative support for Excellence Through People, Ireland's standard for human resource development and represents the staff as Safety Representative on the H&S Committee.



MARIE O'RIORDAN, Dip Office Info Systems, Dip Integrated Computer Appn.

Marie joined the Community Development Team in October 2007 where she assisted with LDSIP and LEADER administration. Marie researched Wildlife and Information Panels for the walkways and produced a series of Duhallow Walks Brochures. In addition to dealing with general queries in the front office she is responsible for the co-ordination of a number of publications including the 08/09 Progress Report.



CATHERINE CROWLEY, B.Sc (Food Business), M.Sc. (Food Marketing)

With over six years experience in Rural Development, Catherine is the Enterprise Team Leader with IRD Duhallow. She promotes enterprise, craft and tourism development in Duhallow and oversees the day to day operations of staff within the Enterprise team. She plays a leading role in the implementation of a number of programme measures including LEADER, Article 6, the Community Service Programme and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme. She also oversees the financial operations of DART and the Rural Meals Service.



HELEN O'SULLIVAN, B.Soc.Sc., M.Soc.Sc, Dip Com, Leadership & Mgt, Cert in Agri.

Helen joined IRD Duhallow in 2005 and is Youth and Community Development Officer for Eastern Duhallow. She promotes the development and capacity building of community and voluntary groups through training, consultation and information. She is co-ordinator of IRD Duhallow's After-Schools Service and she is also the staff resource for The Duhallow Women's Forum, The Bereavement Support Group & The Domestic Violence Support Group. Helen supports the work of both the Community Development and Youth & Education Working Groups.



KASIA KROL, MA in International Relations, Diploma in European Studies

Kasia hails from Bydgoszcz, a large town in central Poland. She came to Duhallow in November 2006 on work experience through the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme. She is working in the Equality Department and is the staff resource for the Equality & Migrants Working Group. With the Working Group she has developed two Social Centres for Foreign Nationals working in Duhallow. Kasia works closely with the migrant community and the asylum centre in Drishane helping in the integration of communities in the Duhallow area.



TRIONA MURPHY, B.Sc Public Health & Health Promotion

Having completed a summer placement with the Community Development team in 2007, Triona joined the Enterprise team as Employment and Training officer in June 2008. She works directly with the unemployed delivering employment support services through the Duhallow Job Centre. She works closely with employers to secure job placements and organises training to enhance employment opportunities and work-skills for job seekers. Triona is staff resource for the Parenting Alone Support Group and Mental Health Promotion.



DERVAL CORBETT, ECDL

Derval joined IRD Duhallow in December 1999 as Clerical Officer and is based in the Reception and Administration Office. She deals with general enquiries, administration and oversees and maintains stationery orders. She supports the Manager in her participation on a number of National Networks. She is responsible for the preparation of the Monthly Board Pack and also oversees the company's IT systems. Derval is editor of the monthly newsletter which is circulated to over 10,000 homes in Duhallow.



MARTINA O'SULLIVAN SEB (Secretarial Studies), Payroll Technician

Martina was appointed Accounts Administrator in February 2007. She is responsible for the preparation of weekly and monthly accounts and completes the reports submitted to Pobal and the Department on a monthly and quarterly basis. She also assists in the compilation of financial reports presented to the Finance Board on a monthly basis. Martina completed the IPASS Certified Payroll Technician Course in May 2009.

LEADER

IRD Duhallow finally received its contract for the delivery of LEADER 2007-2013 in January. With the fund for rural development after trebling at EU level, we were not disappointed with our allocation of over €10m. Given the long interregnum between programmes, IRD Duhallow was ready to hit the ground running with a number of communities and local businesses ready and waiting for the programme announcement. We evaluated our first project in January and to date have committed over €600,000 to 20 local projects.



Minister Éamon Ó Cuív announced the LEADER Programme, pictured with the Kerry LAGS Reps, Patsy Cronin, South Kerry, Eamon O'Reilly, North & East Kerry, Maura Walsh IRD Duhallow, John Pierce, South Kerry and Antaine O'Se, MFG

IRD Duhallow has worked tirelessly through the Irish LEADER Network, CLE, to negotiate operating rules that deliver maximum funding for communities and local business as well as ensuring the success of the programme. The level of funding available has increased significantly since the LEADER+ programme, with the maximum grant rate now standing at €150,000. Communities can now receive up to 75% funding for eligible capital projects and enterprise project rates remain at 50%. Training is still eligible at 100% for communities and 50% for Enterprise and Analysis and Development at 90% to a maximum of €30,000 for communities and at 75% for private promoters.

Axes 3 & 4

The broad objective of LEADER is to improve the quality of life in rural areas and encourage diversification of economic activity including supports for non-agricultural activities. The programme is subdivided into a number of measures outlined below:

- **Diversification in Non Agricultural Activities** aims to increase the percentage of holdings where the fixed assets of the farm are utilised in any non agricultural activity by a member of the farm for economic gain and will include such activities as the provision of tourism facilities, development of niche tourism or the development of farm shops.
- **Support for Business Creation & Development** strives to position rural areas to provide economic activity of sufficient mass to attract people to live and work in the rural area. Eligible projects will include creation of small rural enterprise space, assistance for business start up, development of innovative products, utilisation of ICT capacity & actions to foster rural entrepreneurship.
- **Encouragement of Tourism Activities** aims to promote sustainable, regionally balanced, tourism potential of all rural areas through the provision of necessary infrastructure & development of the countryside as a resource for everyone.
- **Basic Services for the economy and rural population** aims to identify and provide appropriate cultural & leisure facilities to local communities and will include amenity and leisure facilities, supports for cultural activities, general community and recreational infrastructure.
- **Village Renewal and Development** will enhance the economic and social attractiveness of villages, small towns and the surrounding countryside and will include access to facilities and amenities, public utilities and farmers markets.
- **Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage** will include actions to preserve and develop vernacular architecture, crafts and archaeology, cultural traditions, community environment projects, integrated plans for development of locally significant natural areas.
- **Training** will provide general/specialised training courses, flexible learning opportunities, and the development of training facilities and the facilitation of distant learning.



Mr. Sean Heneghan, Senior Inspector, DCRGA receiving a presentation from Maura Walsh, Manager, IRD Duhallow on the occasion of his retirement with LEADER Inspector Breda Dooley.

In the past, LEADER worked well with other public funding bodies, such as the CLAR Programme, ensuring the maximum amount of funds were made available to community projects. Unfortunately, at present the operating rules prohibit LEADER from co-funding with other public funding agencies, however we are hoping to get this rule changed to allow co-operation with Statutory Agencies to address the urgent economic and social needs in Rural Areas.



Michael Doyle, Jack Roche, Helen O'Sullivan and Maura Walsh with the Northern Ireland Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Michelle Gildernew at the launch of "Local Sustainable Solutions to the Rural Challenge"

The new LEADER programme is being delivered through Axis 3 and Axis 4 of the EAFRD and IRD Duhallow's Strategic focus is to make the best use of our natural and cultural resources through four main pillars: Human, Cultural, Economic and Environmental resource development. In *human* terms, we believe that the essential ingredients for a thriving rural community are community ownership and management of local assets, stronger local governance and effective community action planning and strong social networks founded on high levels of volunteering and skilled support. Through *cultural development*, we aim to build on Duhallow's position as a tourism destination. For *economic development*, our primary objective is to fully realise Duhallow's potential to become self sustaining by encouraging and fostering entrepreneurship, business development and expansion and finally focussing on *environmental resource* development, IRD Duhallow plans to support the development of eco-tourism attractions, promote conservation ensuring flourishing natural environmental resources.

Information seminars are being held across the region to support people to access LEADER funding and assist them to meet the strict criteria laid down by the Department and the EU.



Finola Moylette DCRGA, Danielle Byrne Programme Manager Community Services Programme & Rural Social Scheme Pobal and Mary Burke RSS Section DCRGA at the RSS Conference in Croke Park.



Kathleen Stack, Assistant Secretary with responsibility for LEADER and Gerry Kearney, Secretary General, DCRGA.

Rural Social Scheme



RSS Supervisors from left: Tim Ring, Sheila O'Keeffe and Pat Fitzpatrick

Background

We are now in year 5 of our Rural Social Scheme, and since its inception, RSS is widely recognised as a massive resource to rural communities as well as to the low income smallholders participating in it. IRD Duhallow has an allocation of 58 participants which affords us three schemes with three respective supervisors. Unlike CE, RSS is not a labour market scheme. It is simply a scheme with two purposes; to provide additional income for low income farmers or their family members while offering communities and associations additional labour for community projects and services. The value to the participants and the Duhallow region in economic terms is over €1 million annually. The value of RSS at local level in Duhallow was highlighted this year when materials budgets were severely cut. IRD Duhallow had no choice but to ask communities availing of our services to pay a nominal fee towards the material costs for RSS. Communities were very forthcoming and as a result we were in a position to maintain our current level of service.



RSS Participants Sheila O'Callaghan (left), Dan Cahill (top right) and Tim Mahoney (bottom right) successfully combine farming with RSS work.

RSS and Rural Isolation

In March 2009, Journalist Jennifer Hough researched an in dept article on Rural Ireland, which appeared in the Irish Examiner in April. As part of her research she spoke to a number of RSS participants from the Duhallow region. Her article highlighted the importance of



Nora Durcan, Executive Officer Dept Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs RSS section



Gerard O'Sullivan working on the Duhallow Way.

the scheme to them individually, not only as a means of earning an extra income to supplement their often meagre farm income, but it is also a social outlet for participants who are isolated and would have very little contact with other people otherwise. The participants spoke of the strong sense of solidarity and support which they had received from their fellow participants and the Local Action Group since joining the RSS.



Con Twomey and Dermot Murphy painting in Bweeng National School.

Mossie Reidy laying slabs in the "Time to Talk, Time to Listen" section of the park in Kanturk

Supporting Voluntary Effort

Everyone knows the huge amount of voluntary labour that goes into keeping rural villages tidy and in enhancing their appearance with landscaped areas and flower beds. The RSS provides a vital support to this voluntary effort. Throughout Duhallow the impact of the RSS can be seen in Community Walls re-built, cleaned or painted, landscaping, planting and weeding, grass cutting, strimming, grottos and holy wells cleaned and landscaped, Community Centres' refurbishment and maintenance, Community Child Care Facilities maintained as well as the Green Man street sweeping service.



Mary Kelleher, Caretaker at the sheltered housing in Kilcorney

Con S Murphy power washing Rockchapel National School

Community Projects

Another benefit of the Rural Social Scheme is the ability to provide a maintenance and caretaking service for different community facilities throughout the region. A number of painting projects have been undertaken by the RSS in the past year, such as Boherbue, Derrinagree, Kilbrin, Meelin and Cloghoul National Schools, houses at St Fursey's Terrace in Banteer, and in O'Callaghan Park in Kanturk. RSS participants work in the preparation and delivery of meals for the elderly in DCFS and in insulation of attics and walls in the Warmer Homes Scheme. We also have participants providing support for child care facilities, community centres and sporting facilities throughout the Duhallow Region.

Walks

The RSS continues to carry out maintenance of National Trail Standard walks in the region which it also helped develop over the years through the RSS Capital budget. The RSS also commits to the continuous improvement of walks which includes the constant up-grading of the Duhallow Way which runs 29km east to west through the region as well as developing and maintaining 5 Looped Walks throughout Duhallow. Also this year for the first time the RSS supported a trails day which was part of a national initiative to promote new and upgraded walkways and walking in general throughout the country.

Warmer Homes Initiative



COLM CROWLEY, Certificate in Business Studies (Marketing)

Colm joined IRD Duhallow in July 2007 as the Warmer Homes Scheme Coordinator and is responsible for the management of the scheme. Coming from the private sector he brought with him a range of experience, particularly in marketing and customer relations. He has a certificate in Energy Awareness, which enables him to deliver

energy advice to clients. He is also a registered BER Assessor with Sustainable Energy Ireland.

Duhallow Warmer Homes Initiative

IRD Duhallow's Warmer Homes Initiative is now in its fourth year. Sustainable Energy Ireland continues to support the initiative by providing funding for materials and overheads and staffing is provided through the Pobal administered Community Services Programme. The Rural Social Scheme also plays an integral part in its

effective delivery by providing RSS workers. With government policy set to reduce fuel poverty, SEI received additional funding in 2009. Subsequently, we were delighted to increase our target for houses for the year to over 500.



Warmer Homes Scheme administrators Denise McGeough and Mary Cherry with Colm Crowley, Coordinator.



CSP participant Michael Enright fitting walk boards in an attic as part of the Warmer Homes Initiative.



RSS participant Tim Enright insulating a cold water tank.

Attic Insulation

In 2008, we insulated 215 attics and with the increase in funding, we have more than doubled our targets for 2009. Two extra insulation teams were set up using RSS resources and SEI funding in order to reach this target creating 4.5 new jobs locally.

Cavity Wall Insulation

SEI provided funding in November 2008 to set up a cavity wall insulation team. A van was purchased and kitted out with bead and glue hoses. The insulation is put in by drilling holes into the wall and the cavity is filled with a bonded bead. A 45ft container was also purchased to store the bead. One full time staff member has been funded by SEI, with the remaining staff coming from RSS. All staff underwent extensive training.



Liam Buicke filling cavity wall insulation as part of the Warmer Homes Initiative.



The Cavity Wall insulation team making their way to the next house.

Training

Warmer Homes staff have completed Manual Handling training, while the installers and surveyors have completed a Safe Pass course. Specific specialist training has been provided by Energy Action with NCE Insulation, Cork, and Cúnamh, Tralee, assisting with the set up training. The cavity insulation team received on site training from Insulation Systems Ltd, who also supplied the cavity wall equipment.



Jackie and Nell Cronin whose house was insulated under the Warmer Homes Scheme.

State Agency Support

The ESB continues to support the initiative and has made available to us free of charge a quantity of lagging jackets and low energy light bulbs again this year. We are very grateful to Anne Allen, Public Relations Officer with ESB Networks, for her support with the project this year.

Care and Repair Duhallow

In 2008, IRD Duhallow, in association with Age Action, set up the Care and Repair Duhallow Programme. This programme provides a small repair job service to persons over 65, using a pool of trustworthy volunteers and handypersons who have been trained by Age Action. The service is free to people who cannot afford it, you only pay for the materials used. For jobs which will need a professional tradesman, such as electrical or plumbing work, a database of reliable trades people has been set up to refer clients requiring this service. We also have a regular phone call service for elderly people who do not have frequent contact with a relative or friend, staffed by RSS. We are very grateful to Sean Silke of Age Action for his support with this programme which works well in conjunction with the Warmer Homes Initiative.

Monitored and Smoke Alarms

In 2008, IRD Duhallow received funding under the Scheme of Community Support for Older People, from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Under this scheme, 59 householders received a Socially Monitored Alarm installed by a contracted installer. 230 households received two smoke alarms each which were installed by the Warmer Homes teams. Funding for this scheme was suspended in the recent budget but is expected to resume later this year.



RSS participant Sheila Looney installing a smoke alarm

Agriculture

The reforms and restructuring in agriculture has heralded major challenges across the farming community. The real impact of the reforms has started to take effect and many farm households in Duhallow have been considering their options for the future. It has been found that 73% of farms are deemed to be non-viable, in addition, many farm families are also socially at risk due to isolation. Against this background and guided by the Agriculture Working Group which reports quarterly to the Board, IRD Duhallow implements a range of supports for farm families through the LEADER and Local Development Social Inclusion Programme to improve on-farm efficiency, support diversification, and promote agri-tourism enterprises to supplement farm family income. The Agriculture Working Group includes representatives from Small Holders, IFA, ICMSA, ICSA, The Co-Ops, Marts, Bee-Keepers, Teagasc, and the Cork Environmental Forum.



Jack Kennedy, Dairy Editor Irish Farmers Journal, Jack Roche, Chairperson of the Agriculture Working Group IRD Duhallow, Mark Maguire, Dept Agriculture who spoke at the AI Information Seminar with Katie Crowley, IRD Duhallow.

Smallholder Programme

The Focal Farmer programme assists Low Income Family Units to maintain a viable family income by maximising the farm enterprise and by providing a number of key services which include: Soil Sampling, Silage Testing, promotion and support for Milk Recording, promoting AI as a means to improve stock, tailored Financial Advice including promotion of REPS, Farm Assist and the Rural Social Scheme, Educational forums, Study Visits, Discussion Group membership and Capital Supports for Diversification projects.



Katie Crowley, IRD Duhallow taking soil samples for a Focal Farmer in Kanturk.

For many, the main constraints on adopting new on-farm enterprises are: capital investment, technical advice, time and general information. The specific objectives of the measure, Diversification into Non-Agricultural Activities under the LEADER Programme is to create alternative on-farm employment opportunities in non-agricultural activities and services. A growing feature of farming is the increase in the number of farms no longer able to sustain farming families without additional on-farm income supplementation.



Charlie the Dog relaxes after a hard day's work on the farm.



Conor Creedon with farmers from Duhallow at the Farm Walk on his farm in Rathmore.



Article 6 Harnessing Rural Capital

The harnessing Rural Capital project was funded through Article 6 of the European The overall objective of the project was to assist rural communities to deal with the major challenges presented by restructuring in the agriculture sector by harnessing four dimensions of Rural, Human, Infrastructural and Natural Capital. Outside the Farm Gate Training provided a number of practical training courses focusing on sustainability and diversification opportunities. Over one hundred and thirty farming families completed training in forklift, excavator, safe pass, health & safety, career options for farm families, start your own business, strimmer safety, tractor maintenance, quad bike, chainsaw, dumper and first aid.

Farm Diversification

IRD Duhallow actively promotes Pluri-Activity and encourages farming families to engage in niche product markets in particular in the areas of artisan food production and rural tourism to seek alternative ways of gaining or supplementing their income. IRD Duhallow actively supports greater female participation and supports young farmers to investigate alternative farm enterprises which will enhance their income into the future, create employment opportunities and maintain a vibrant rural community in Duhallow. Funding is available through LEADER 2007-2013 to support farmers to diversify into non agricultural activity.



Eoghan Dempsey from Rockchapel, keeps a close eye on the new onions & lettuce plants planted by his parents Marie & Paul in raised beds.

Agri-tourism is a complementary activity that combines well with farming activity and also can provide many farm families with the opportunity to develop a viable on-farm alternative enterprise. Through the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme On-Farm Diversification is supported and in 2009 Ruth Gettings's received funding to develop a Horticultural enterprise. Ruth currently supplies the Farmers Market in Kanturk with a wide variety of fruit and vegetable plants and has further plans to develop her business and expand her supply chain.

Duhallow Beekeepers

2008 proved to be another successful year for the Duhallow Beekeepers with over 60 individuals participating in a series of lectures on the different aspects of beekeeping which was supported by IRD Duhallow.



Members of the Duhallow Beekeepers who participated in a number of Workshops with David Lee, Bee Master and former President of FIBA, Andy Bourke, Secretary of the Duhallow Beekeepers, Patsy Bennett, Guest Speaker, and Pat Keane, Chairperson of the Duhallow Beekeepers.

Agriculture

Information Seminars

With the ever changing role of farming, especially in relation to the environment, animal welfare, nutrient management and business development the farming practitioners of today must keep themselves continuously informed. Throughout the year IRD Duhallow organised a number of information seminars.



Jerry O'Leary, and Sean McCarthy, Headford Killarney who attended the AI information Seminar.



James & Sheila Crowley Nadd with Jeremiah Twomey Donoughmore, at the AI Information Seminar.



Ross Evans, Geneticist with the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation who spoke at the AI Information Seminar with Joan Gayer of the Agricultural Working Group.

A Farm Visit was organised to the farm of Conor and Eilish Creedon in Rathmore. Conor represents the farming sector on the Board of IRD Duhallow and is also a member of the ICMSA. He is an active member of the Agricultural Working Group and was a member of the initial Focal Farmer Programme. Conor provided the visitors with a detailed background of the family farm and how he has reached current levels of production, he gave an informative talk on Grassland Management and Grass Budgeting. He also discussed the Bulls used for AI in 2007, production summaries of lactations, calving patterns, and EBI herd summaries. Conor gave farmers a tour of the recently erected farm buildings and explained about the Farm Waste Management Scheme and the grants available to him at the time.

Nano Nagle Centre

Twenty Five Focal Farmers attended the Organic Farm in the Nano Nagle Centre. It is a mixed farm which encompasses organic grassland, poultry, beef, sheep, vegetables, fruit and protected crops, they also have a number of environmental features including, Reed Bed System, Geothermal Heating, Solar Panels and Wood Pellet Boilers. The trip presented an opportunity to examine a diverse range of farming enterprises and potential diversification opportunities available.



Farm Manager at the Nano Nagle Centre Kitty Scully, facilitates a farm walk for a number of Focal Farmers from Duhallow who visited the farm in Ballygriffin.

Women in Agriculture

Seven women from the Duhallow area attended the "ACC Bank Women and Agriculture Conference" in Athlone in October 2008. Key issues affecting rural women's lives were examined such as succession planning and pensions. The event proved to be a huge success and highlighted the enormous contribution women make to the success of the family farm.



Ruth Gettings, Kilcorney watering plants in her new LDSIP funded polytunnel.



The skill of hand shearing is still practised in Duhallow.

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme supported the delivery of a number of innovative actions in 2008. Two E-Feirm courses delivered by tutor Joan Maguire were undertaken by twenty four farmers assisting them to streamline their business administration through E-Services. One-to-one tailored Financial Advice was organised for five farming families and a trip to the Ploughing Championships in Co Kilkenny was also organised by IRD Duhallow with transport provided by DART.

Maximising On-Farm Efficiency

IRD Duhallow encourages farmers to reduce input costs by implementing best practises such as AI, Milk Recording, Silage testing and Soil testing. One of the essential elements required for effective dairying into the future is to improve overall efficiency and acquire a High Herd EBI. In January 2009 the Agricultural Working Group organised an AI Information Seminar which was attended by over 70 farmers. Speakers on the night included Jack Kennedy, Dairy Editor of the Irish Farmers Journal, Ross Evans, Irish Cattle Breeding Federation, and Mark Maguire, of the Department of Agriculture. All three speakers spoke on the advantages of AI in Dairy and Beef herds and the positive cost benefit analysis to farmers.



Maura Kavanagh proudly displays her range of Health & Soda Bread and iced queen cakes at the IRD Duhallow Farmers Market.



Rose Drew, Duhallow Community Food Services, displaying an array of fresh baking at IRD Duhallow's Farmers Market in Kanturk.

Farmers Market

IRD Duhallow has coordinated the Farmers Market in Kanturk since 2003. The market provides an outlet for farming families to develop an alternative enterprise, while giving customers the opportunity to purchase local fresh produce. The farmers market continues to serve customers with a variety of locally grown produce. The market is a vital link between the consumer and the farmer while also functioning as a vibrant meeting place. The market is located at the rear of Twohig's Supervalu in Kanturk and is open from 10.30am-2.30pm every Thursday & Saturday.



Tara O'Doherty of JOD Foods displaying a large selection of cheddar cheeses at the Farmers Market.

Community Development

The Community Development Working Group promotes community consultation and local volunteerism as key ingredients for successful local community development. The Working Group encourages communities to seek support and advice in the drawing up of proposals for future development. Through the Community Forum, all local groups and communities are encouraged to network, exchange ideas and seek out models of best practice in the bottom up approach.



Noel Dillon IRD Duhallow summarising the highlights of Mamo McDonalds speech on the joys of growing old at IRD Duhallows Conference 'Tackling Rural Isolation'.

The Working Group recognises that Local Assets are the primary building blocks for sustainable community development and with this fundamental in mind, strives to promote among communities and volunteers a sense of pride in the local area. It is imperative that we build on the skills of the people living in our communities and on the potential of the various existing community groups within Duhallow to ensure that communities become sustainable well into the future. From young people to the recently retired, Duhallow has a rich treasury of human resources and IRD Duhallow sees it as vital that this resource is fostered and developed for the benefit of the entire region.



IRD Duhallow staff members discuss Transnational Partnership possibilities for the LEADER Programme with Dr. Brendan O'Keeffe, Caroline Creamer, Dr. Neale Blair and Karen Keaveney, Authors of 'Local Sustainable Solutions to the Rural Challenge', Brian Murray, Workspace Draperstown, Mary Devlin, Fr. Sean Nolan, Josie Brady all of Truagh.

Following the announcement of the LEADER programme earlier this year, and in recognition of the fact that each community has a number of different groups and associations, IRD Duhallow has been working with all communities to develop one clear strategy for each village that will encompass all groups. This strategy will enable locals to work together in the spirit of volunteerism in order to build on the assets of the area and to maximise accessibility to funding while adopting methods of best practice.

Following the series of workshops the working group organised in 2008 to assist communities in developing their strategic plans, there is great eagerness and interest amongst communities to undertake small, medium and large scale projects. It is evident that there is a greater sense of solidarity amongst various groups within each community due to the fact that groups have been working strategically together through their participation in IRD Duhallow's Community Development Forum.



Eucheria Chambers, Manager Bank of Ireland, Kanturk, tailors specific advice in response to the report 'The Needs of Older People in Duhallow'.

Inclusiveness and Volunteerism

The Community Development Working Group & the Duhallow Volunteer Bureau aim to promote and celebrate volunteerism in all its forms. Peoples lives are busier than ever but without the selflessness of people in giving their time freely we would not be able to improve the quality of life in Duhallow. Our Working Group recognises this and believes that community work must be made as straight forward as possible for volunteers. It is vital also that we continue to recognise the invaluable work that volunteers undertake, no matter how small a task it is. The Kerry Community Awards Initiative recognises the hard work of community and voluntary groups that seek to improve quality of life in Co. Kerry. It is initiatives such as these that encourage volunteers to give back to their communities. In 2009 Gneeveguilla Basketball Club were the winners of the Physical Activity Category which was well deserved and provides motivation for other groups in the locality to continue the good work that they do.



Clodagh McSweeney with her daughter at Kilcorney Parent & Toddler Group.



Members of Kilcorney Parent & Toddler Group with their children enjoying their new LDSIP funded toys.



Noel Dillon, IRD Duhallow, Michael Moynihan, T.D., Minister Máire Hocht, Department of Health & Children and Councillor Marie Murphy, attending IRD Duhallows 'Conference on Tackling Rural Isolation'.



John Hurley accepts the Physical Activity category award on behalf of Gneeveguilla Basketball Club from Maura Walsh of IRD Duhallow at the Kerry Community Awards.

Environmental Awareness Month

For the 3rd year running IRD Duhallows Environmental Awareness Month was a great success and was facilitated in conjunction with both the Local Authorities and An Taisces National Spring Clean. This event was promoted throughout the 36 communities in the region with support from local schools, tidy towns committees and individuals. All participating communities were supplied with litter pickers, and materials and an agreed collection point was co-ordinated with the local authorities. The Duhallow Environmental Awareness Month was officially launched on the 1st April at a public seminar which focused on energy efficiency in the home with presentations from IRD Duhallow's warmer homes scheme and An Taisce's Green Schools Programme. Many communities have since continued to come together and undertake a weekly clean up throughout their town or village rather than just doing an annual clean up.

Community Development

SAOI Network

Actively Retired groups in the Duhallow region receive support from IRD Duhallow to undertake various workshops and courses such as computers, art classes and self empowerment classes as these all aim to reduce the isolation which many older people may experience. The SAOI Network acts as an advocate for older people in Duhallow and in 2008 the Network received a grant from Age & Opportunity to undertake research into the Needs of Older People in Duhallow. Following workshops held with older people and professionals working in the area, Minister Máire Hootor officially launched the final report at IRD Duhallow's Conference 'Tackling Rural Isolation...The Role of Community Volunteers'. This report revealed the importance of improving older peoples health and well being and safety and security in living alone. The development of better transport, housing and social outlets and facilities for older people were all raised as the main needs of older people in Duhallow.



Attending the IRD Duhallow Community Forum Meeting were Eileen Linehan, Community Development Team Leader, Siobhan Griffin Kerry Community & Voluntary Forum, Jack Roche, IRD Duhallow with Eilish Coakley, Rathmore who was elected to Kerry C&V Forum on the night and Triona Murphy IRD Duhallow.

Estate Management

IRD Duhallow works closely with the Local Authorities in supporting the development of residents associations in local authority estates in Duhallow. In 2008 composting demonstrations were held in a number of estates to raise awareness and promote composting and recycling amongst households. Also IRD Duhallow was involved in drafting the policy framework on Estate Management and Community Safety (EMCS) with Kerry County Development Board. EMCS is an interagency approach to the management of housing estates which has proven successful in urban areas in Kerry.

Urban & Village Renewal

The Community Development Working Group in 2008 supported communities to undertake small scale village renewal projects to compliment existing amenities. Both Kiskeam and Kanturk have developed a 'Time to Talk, Time to Listen Garden', with disability access available at the space in Kanturk. These new amenities provide people with a new opportunity to take time out of their busy lives and more importantly to listen and talk to each other. Small scale landscaping projects were also undertaken in Tullylease and Aubane.

Alzheimers 'Big Brew' Tea Day

The Community Development Working Group hosted the Alzheimers Big Brew Campaign in the Farmers Market in May to raise awareness of alzheimers and on the supports available for both the patient and the family. This event was a great success with over €560 raised on the day. A raffle of spot prizes donated by local businesses greatly helped to raise this amount for such a worthy cause.

Domestic Violence Initiative

The Duhallow Domestic Violence Support Group raises awareness of domestic abuse. Dedicated volunteers have undertaken training to develop a local service for Duhallow. Support from the Garda Síochána, the Medical Profession and The Childcare Sector ensures that this initiative will succeed locally. In 2008 volunteers participated in an International Campaign by holding an exhibition of 'Whispers' in local schools and businesses which consisted of 'sayings' that were collected over the years from children from abusive homes. 'I hate it when we have to leave the house at night; the worst part is trying to keep quite'. (A girl aged 9)



Children from Tullylease N.S & Newmarket Boys School having fun learning about the importance of recycling and composting during a Green Schools Workshop organised by IRD Duhallow & An Taisce.



Members of Freemount Actively Retired Group receiving guidance from tutor Anna O'Keeffe during an advanced art class funded by IRD Duhallow.

Resources to Groups

With 33 communities and over 100 groups in Duhallow, it is important to recognise that different areas are at different stages of development. Through our strategic framework we aim to enhance local areas and facilities by working with the local communities and meeting their needs through the bottom up approach. Following an audit in 2008 of all community facilities in Duhallow many were identified

as lacking in basic resources and equipment. Many of these groups were supported to improve these facilities through small scale grants from the Local Development Social Inclusion programme. The audit also served to focus groups on facilities and amenities they should be striving to develop under the LEADER programme.



Catherine KilBride and Deirdre Raftery, Authors of the 'The Voyage Out', Michelle Cooper Galvin Producer DVD 'Buíochas', Sr. Marie Pitcher Congregation Leader, Sr. Peter Fahy Assistant Producer DVD 'Buíochas', Minister for Education Batt O'Keeffe TD (back from left) Maura Walsh IRD Duhallow and Sr. Rosemary Barter IJ Province Leader at the Infant Jesus Ireland Centenary Celebrations and launch of the Book and DVD in the Green Glens, Millstreet.



Jack Roche, Chair of IRD Duhallow's SAOI Network with the members, who are drawn from all the actively retired groups in Duhallow.

Enterprise

Enterprise Development

The integration and the complementarity of LEADER and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme has contributed to the success of Duhallow's economic policy. Our Enterprise Development working group has devised local economic strategies which are incorporated in LEADER and LDSIP Strategic Plans and which draw fully on the availability of funding under the LEADER 2007-2013 programme. Our aim is to foster the enterprise culture raising the competitiveness and innovation capacity locally.

With the precarious nature of employment in traditional manufacturing many people are very vulnerable to the economic downturn and locally tailored interventions will continue to be essential in driving economic development and diversification over the coming years. We have witnessed the positive economic impact of successive LEADER programmes in Duhallow and LEADER 2007-2013 offers a solid base for further economic growth and diversification and the development of micro-enterprises. However the working group is disappointed that small and medium enterprises are excluded from LEADER.

IRD Duhallow is proud of its economic impact as a source of employment growth and LEADER supported industries now account for 21% of all industrial employment in Duhallow and this figure will continue to grow as the sustainability of these local firms exceed that of larger foreign industries which based in Ireland in the 80's.

Dan Buckley with his wife Eileen, preparing to erect the new Clover Hill Food Ingredients sign at the entrance to the factory that was once Molex.



One such example of an innovative rural enterprise is LEADER funded Clover Hill Food Ingredients Ltd. The Enterprise Development Working Group is heartened that this local indigenous family run business has taken over the factory that was recently vacated by Molex, a multinational company. Prior to setting up Clover Hill Food Ingredients, Managing Director Dan Buckley worked in a technical sales capacity for 15 years with leading global food ingredient manufacturers. Dan identified a niche in the Irish food ingredients market and set out on his own with funding from LEADER. Cloverhill Food Ingredients was established in 2003 and has witnessed unprecedented growth; he welcomes the challenge ahead and is proud to say that the business is now creating employment for 17 people and by 2010 he hopes to employ a further 3 staff.



John Kiely of Kiely Precision Engineering who received a CLAR contribution of €8,337 for conversion to 3 phase electricity.

Economic Infrastructure

We welcome the National Broadband Scheme to extend the wireless broadband service to the rural areas which is essential enterprise infrastructure. We were disappointed to hear the ending of targeted funding under CLAR for the provision of the single to 3 phase electricity conversion which benefited 25 new and existing SME's in Duhallow with a contribution of €450,000.



Members of the IRD Duhallow Enterprise Network comprising of Catherine Crowley, Enterprise Team Leader and some local business entrepreneurs including, Susan Cremin, Eileen O'Sullivan and back row (l-r): Gerard Murphy, Pádraig Ó'Suilleabháin, Gerard Linehan, Kieran Linehan and Philip Jones.

IRD Duhallow Enterprise Network

IRD Duhallow's Enterprise Network funded under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme provides a supportive structure to those at early stage of business development. It optimises enterprise needs and addresses challenges, removing the isolation faced by many micro enterprises. In particular it enhances knowledge, skill and expertise of local enterprises and addresses the gaps in the provision of training for those who are seeking help in starting a new business. This year over 40 individuals have availed of training in our Start Up Business Training Programmes. A number of entrepreneurs have also benefited from Mentoring under our Mentor Programme.

We are delighted with the support and financial commitment that the Department of Social and Family Affairs contributed for the provision of training under the Self Employment Options Programme. This encouraged 16 Social Welfare participants who are starting up their own business.

The Network fulfils an essential role in terms of bringing people together across the small business sector in a supportive way and provides resources to facilitate workshops on a range of business issues and promotes further development of key business skills to enhance the management capacity of owner/managers. Specific workshops which have benefitted members greatly include bookkeeping, computerised accounts, marketing, taxation and finance. The Network has improved the survival and growth prospects of many of our start-up businesses and networking provides a real solution to the building of personal contacts for their future business success.



Local accountant and member of the Enterprise Working group, Gerard McCarthy addressing the implications of the budget to members of Duhallow Enterprise Network.



Members of the Enterprise Network Susan Cremin and Eileen O'Sullivan taking notes at a recent Enterprise Workshop event.

Enterprise

FÁS Competency Development Programme

In 2008, IRD Duhallow supported four local enterprises who needed assistance in the development of their business to avail of mentoring under the FÁS Competency Development Programme. Under this programme a group of consultants assisted the participating business in a number of key areas including production management; quality management systems; finance; health & safety and marketing/business development.



Philip Jones is hard at work transforming landscapes and his dedication offers inspiration as can be seen at Millstreet Town Park

One of the beneficiaries Venture-One is a family run landscaping business based in Kiskeam that specialises in commercial and private garden design, improvements, maintenance and tree surgery. The business was set up by Philip Jones in 2005 when he moved to Ireland and the promoter is highly qualified in forestry and countryside management and has a range of experience both in Ireland and the UK. The promoter also operates a 3 star garden centre – All about Plants - established in 2008 which gained a special award from Bord Bia “Best Plant Centre” and is managed by his wife Tracy.

LEADER 2007-2013 and Economic Development

Under the LEADER 2007-2013 programme we provide a range of assistance for viable start-up and expanding micro-enterprises that have less than 10 employees and turnover of less than €2 million. In evaluating projects under this measure we place significant emphasis on the implementation of innovative approaches, avoidance of deadweight, the marketing strategy and the financial strength of the enterprise, the employment achievement and the potential for business development and growth. The following projects provide a brief description of the Rural Micro-Enterprise Projects supported under the current LEADER programme.

Hickey Metering Ltd

Based in Cullen a new enterprise Hickey Metering Ltd. was established with support from technical and financial assistance under the LEADER programme. In 2008, the promoter was placed by IRD Duhallow on the FÁS Competency Development Programme. Managing Director, Connor Hickey was approved a LEADER grant towards the set up costs of the new business including the purchase of software and specialised equipment.



Connor Hickey meters the milk from one of Dairygold's Milk Tankers using the Piper Metering System funded under the LEADER programme.

The business is involved in the installation and maintenance of milk metering systems and will be the exclusive and independent installer and maintenance company in Ireland for Diesel and Piper metering systems. Technology driven in electronics and software, this enterprise is highly skilled and so far has created employment for 3 full time technical staff.

TerrProfile Ltd

With support from LEADER 2007-2013 a technologically driven new enterprise flourishes in Banteer providing ground penetrating radar services using high tech GPR equipment. TerrProfile has created employment for 3 full-time staff and as the business continues to thrive it hopes to employ an additional 2 staff. The promoters also benefited from mentoring under the FÁS Competency Development Programme and through IRD Duhallow's Enterprise Network.



Using the SIR-20 acquisition systems and accessories, director Martin Cremin of TerrProfile shows the application of the equipment in use in the detection of archaeological features at Kanturk Castle.



IRD Duhallow supports 25 art and craft producers to showcase their products at the Annual Craft Fair in Banteer funded under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.



Michelle Mirtschink displays her knitted products at the Craft Fair in the Glen Theatre, pictured with Andreas Todt modelling one of her jumpers.

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme - Supporting Enterprise

Enterprise Supports are an important feature of the LDSIP and is differentiated from mainstream enterprise initiatives by its focus on disadvantage and on supporting individuals who are unemployed into self employment by providing a point of contact, information, advice and support structure through training and education, networking and aftercare as well as small grants towards start-up.

Aljen Solutions

After being made redundant Joseph Dennehy contacted the office of IRD Duhallow for assistance to research the feasibility of setting up his own business in Rathcoole. ALJEN Solutions is a mechanical engineering consultancy service providing design solutions and technical support to manufacturing companies and the service providers of such companies.



Joseph Dennehy, Aljen Solutions from his workshop in Rathcoole designs an application tooling system for use in Molex in Shannon.

Its services provided include product design, tool sourcing, machine design, process and equipment design and Aljen Solutions has since won contracts both in Ireland and abroad.

LEADER Projects Approved 2009

Project Name	Description	€
Support for Business Creation & Development		
Hickey Metering Ltd	Funding to start up business of Hickey Metering which involves the sales, installation and maintenance of milk metering systems. This project involves the purchase of hardware and software	€14,000
Terrprofile Ltd	Purchase GPR, Resistivity and Seismic equipment for analysis of sub surface ground conditions	€83,500
IRD Duhallow Social Economy Working Group	Analysis and development of proposals for development of Community Enterprise	€4,410
Brian Paterson & Sarah Evans trading as The Secret Garden	To construct a classroom facility, develop outdoor demonstration area and provide car park.	€16,100
Basic Service for the Economy and Rural Population		
Kanturk & District Community Council	Grant aid material and equipment for display boards and promotion of the first Arts Festival in Kanturk	€6,582
Banteer Community Hall	The expansion of the facility to include changing rooms, showers, steam room, toilets and gym equipment	€143,140
Ballydaly Community Hall	To install a new heating system in the hall comprising of seven new radiators, a boiler and a tank for oil	€4,035
Freemount Community Playground Development Association	Development of site for playground with fencing and soft tiles	€42,020
Freemount Community Development Association	Remove current floor of the Community Hall and replace with new concrete floor incorporating under floor heating.	€39,226
Duhallow Choral Society	Training for members of Duhallow Choral Society	€6,000
Village Renewal & Development		
Boherbue Development Association	Reposition the village pump to its original place and lay down stone work and flower beds	€2,238
Conservation & Upgrading the Rural heritage		
Centenary Committee Infant Child of Jesus	Research the history of the arrival of Infant Jesus Sisters from France to Drishane and their impact on the locality. Publish book on research and produce DVD.	€60,725
Boherbue Parish Council	To publish book on history of church in Boherbue and Kiskeam	€7,125
JOK Trust	To develop plan for James O' Keeffe Institute and Grounds	€30,000
Duhallow Women's Forum	To produce a book in honour of Nora Herlihy's legacy and the Credit Union Movement in Ireland.	€36,960
Kanturk Angling Club	Acquire the expertise to perform investigative monitoring and surveying on the Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the Blackwater and its tributaries	€30,000
Training & Information		
Duhallow Choral Society	Purchase equipment and uniforms	€15,700
Employment & Training Working Group	To deliver a pathways to employment programme for rural dwellers and communities in Duhallow	€11,500
IRD Duhallow Enterprise Development Working Group	To deliver training workshops to members of the Enterprise Network	€2,550
Employment & Training Working Group	Fetac intermediate Computer Course	€5,185
Agriculture Working Group	To deliver counterbalance forklift training to a number of individuals in the Duhallow area	€4,500
Rockchapel Comhaltas Ceoilteoiri Eireann	To run a master class for young people on traditional Irish music and dance and develop a group who will be in a position to perform and teach Sliabh Luachra music and dance	€19,870
Encouragement of Tourism Activities		
Maritime Tourism Ltd Trading as Ballyhass Lakes	Construction of a new store and utility building and purchase of equipment for activity centre	€43,345
Co-operation projects		
Enterprise Working Group	Predevelopment/animation costs of an Transnational/Interterritorial Project to promote The Duhallow Way as part of the European E8 trans Europe walkway with Poland	€2,000
Agriculture Working Group	Training for Rural Abattoirs to market under Regional Brand	€8,500
Total		€639,211



Members of the IRD Duhallow Project Evaluation Group from left, Marie Keane Fáilte Ireland, Sean Kelly & John Fuller, Cork Community & Voluntary Forum, Eileen Linehan, IRD Duhallow, Derry Fitzpatrick, Mort O' Connor, Enterprise Ireland, Maura Walsh, IRD Duhallow and Eucharía Chambers, Manager, Bank of Ireland Kanturk.

Local Development Social Inclusion Programme Funds Committed to Projects to December 2008

Sector	Project Name	Description	Committed
Services to the unemployed	Focal Farmer Programme	Business & Financial Advice Information Seminars on topical issues for low income Smallholders Direct Interventions for Farmers including soil, silage, milk recording and AI grants Support for on Farm Diversification including poultry, farming and beekeeping Low Income Smallholder Discussion Groups	€2,653.00 €2,925.00 €17,814.00 €9,607.00 €103.00
	Duhallow Farmers' Market IRD Duhallow Job Centre Employment & Training Working Group	Support for the Development of the Farmers' Market Support for Job-seekers including CV preparation, interview skills, job placements, etc. Reception Skills Course Towards Occupation Training	€4,960.00 €603.00 €8,355.00 €2,325.00
		Transition to Employment Options Programme Pathfinder Software & Training Four Individual Bursaries for Adults who are continuing education Purchase of equipment for social economy enterprise Purchase of equipment for social economy enterprise Set up costs for new social economy enterprise Purchase of equipment to set up new business Purchase of equipment to set up new business Purchase of equipment to set up new business Purchase of equipment for business expansion Purchase of equipment for business expansion Enterprise Workshops Start your own business information booklets Craft Fair Printing and Distributing of Monthly Newsletter	€493.00 €2,394.00 €5,530.00 €1,500.00 €4,000.00 €2,000.00 €3,000.00 €2,500.00 €3,200.00 €300.00 €2,500.00 €1,392.00 €2,000.00 €4,979.00 €10,277.00
Community Development	Domestic Violence Lone Parents Glen Theatre Banteer Knocknagree Community Hall Ballydesmond Community Centre SAOI Network Sean O' Sullivan Women's Forum	Promotion of Domestic Violence Initiative Support for Lone Parents through Training Initiatives & Bursaries Funding for equipment for community theatre Funding for equipment for community facility Funding for equipment for community facility Elderly Workshops & Publications Publication of Book, Kilbreath and Back Personal Development Workshops Edel Quinn conference Nora Herlihy memorial Women's Health Seminar Environmental Awareness Month Community Composting Demonstrations Assist Training Kerry Community Awards Care & Repair Programme Sliabh Luachra Journal Urban & Village Renewal Urban & Village Renewal Urban & Village Renewal Urban & Village Renewal Urban & Village Renewal Funding for equipment Funding for equipment Funding for equipment Information brochures & Business cards 12 week bereavement training programme Advanced Bereavement Support Training Yoga Workshops Rurality in role of carer workshop Computer Training Carers Brochures Disability Awareness Workshops Wheelchair accessible time to talk time to listen tables Sign Language Classes Mental Health Week Essential Guides for foreign Nationals Welfare to Work Information Seminar Rathmore Sports Initiative Intercultural Food Event Banking Workshops	€4,084.00 €1,638.00 €420.00 €396.00 €195.00 €6,470.00 €3,000.00 €3,094.00 €5,243.00 €1,083.00 €1,619.00 €1,421.00 €1,740.00 €860.00 €3,000.00 €2,617.00 €3,377.00 €570.00 €315.00 €260.00 €559.00 €634.00 €276.00 €166.00 €1,252.00 €1,043.00 €8,305.00 €930.00 €2,262.00 €1,295.00 €1,155.00 €743.00 €940.00 €1,764.00 €2,720.00 €108.00 €400.00 €76.00 €127.00 €305.00
	Community Development Working Group		
	Cumann Luachra, Gneeveguilla Araglen Development Association Tullylease Community Council Aubane Community Hall Lismire Development Association Dromtarriffe Parent & Toddler Group Kilcorney Parent & Toddler Group Millstreet Parent & Toddler Group Bereavement Support Group		
	Carers Group		
	Equality Working Group		
Community Based Youth Initiative	Afterschools Homework Support Youth & Education Working Group	Homework Support in four Duhallow Secondary Schools Early Schools Leavers Support Programme Drive Safety Awareness Programme for young people & Parents Transition from Secondary to Third Level Information Initiative National School Debating Competition Internet Safety Seminar Workshops for Children with Dyslexia and other learning difficulties Information for parents of children with dyslexia and other learning difficulties TTRS Computer training for children with learning difficulties Decisions' Information Day Networking & Support for development of clustering in Rurally Isolated Schools Funding to enhance participation of disadvantaged groups in youth clubs activities Development of Vegetable Patch in School E Twinning projects Funding for electronic score board & Equipment Funding for equipment for youth club Funding for equipment for youth club Funding for equipment for youth club Funding for equipment for youth club Funding for equipment for youth club Community Summer Camp promoting inclusion of disadvantaged children Community Summer Camp promoting inclusion of disadvantaged children Community Summer Camp promoting inclusion of disadvantaged children Community Summer Camp promoting inclusion of disadvantaged children	€15,952.00 €3,030.00 €1,945.00 €730.00 €438.00 €974.00 €7,891.00 €1,532.00 €756.00 €1,737.00 €385.00 €1,670.00 €750.00 €415.00 €2,126.00 €695.00 €361.00 €1,000.00 €829.00 €750.00 €671.00 €750.00 €748.00 €750.00
	Banteer Youth Club Knocknagree National School Knockclarig National School Kanturk Basketball club Dromtarriffe Youth Club Castlemagner Youth Club Donoughmore Youth club Ballydesmond Youth Club Newmarket Youth Club Danu Community Childcare, Rathmore Comhaltas Ceoilteoiri Rockchapel Tir na Nog, Ballydesmond Anchor Playschool, Meelin		
Total			€208,757.00

Local Development Social Inclusion Programme

LDSIP strives to counter disadvantage and promote social inclusion through a series of specifically designed measures to alleviate disadvantage. These measures are Service to the Unemployed, Community Development and Community Based Youth Initiatives. LDSIP ensures measures are put in place to tackle social exclusion for the long term unemployed, low income smallholders, those with disabilities, disadvantaged youth, women, migrant workers and a host of other target groups.

Value for Money Review

In 2007 the Department commissioned a Value for Money and Policy Review of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme which was overseen by a Steering Committee with

representatives of the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs and from the Department of Finance. The review was very positive with the focus of LDSIP reaffirmed and highlighted as having a critical role as an enabler. The review also highlighted the achievements of the Local Partnerships nationally in terms of social inclusion. With the economic downturn and the number of people accessing our support on the increase, the review came at a crucial time, highlighting the ongoing need for a strong Social Inclusion Programme.

Role of LDSIP in Duhallow

IRD Duhallow's LDSIP programme has unique features that make it adaptable for responding to the rise in unemployment in Duhallow. LDSIP has the capacity to reach the widest range of unemployed people because delivery is small scale, local and flexible. LDSIP focuses on people who are unemployed through the supports offered through the IRD Duhallow Job Centre; it maintains and strengthens supports for target groups who opt for self employment through the IRD Duhallow Enterprise Network, Mentoring programme; and through small scale capital grants, focuses on retention and creation of employment in communities, leads preparation of life long learning strategies aimed at supporting employment creation and enhancing employability through the Adult and Second Chance Education action and provides supports to people to volunteer to increase participation in community life through the supporting volunteerism action.

Through the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, IRD Duhallow has set up and facilitates a number of support groups including the Duhallow Domestic Violence Group, the Duhallow Bereavement Support Group, Duhallow Parenting Alone Group, Duhallow Carers Group and SAOI, the Duhallow Older Peoples Network. These support structures are essential in ensuring social inclusion for all target groups in the Duhallow region.



Minister of State, John Curran (seated second from left) pictured here with Don Crowley, Chairman of IRD Duhallow (Back Row - Far Right) and the Community Network Partnership Board Members, Back Row (left to right): John Carroll, North Tipperary Leader Partnership, Conal Kavanagh, Wicklow Working Together Chair, Charlie Cunningham, Tullamore Wider Options Chair, John Walsh, Ballyhoura Development Chair, Ciaran Byrne, Cooperation Fingal Board Member, Ciaran Martin, Eiri Corca Baiscinn Chair, Front Row Seated (left to right): Marie Fogarty, Kilkenny Community Action Network Chair, Minister of State John Curran, Martha Bolger, CDCD Network Chair, Josephine Sutton, Portlaoise Community Action Project Chair, Ger Lynch, Mountmellick Development Association Social Inclusion Chair.

Unemployment has risen in Duhallow by over 300% since 2007. This huge increase in such a short period of time has resulted in a surge in the number of people availing of the supports of our Job Centre. Many people have been made redundant from positions they have held for over 20 years therefore up-skilling is crucial to their progression. Many Foreign Nationals are seeking advice and guidance in relation to their rights around redundancy and social welfare entitlements and very few have returned to their countries of origin as they have families and have put down roots here.

The number of people in the target groups of the LDSIP programme has increased rapidly during the year. IRD Duhallow has the challenge of ensuring that we meet the needs of the newly unemployed and all the problems unemployment brings with it while continuing to serve those most marginalised from the workforce and from society in general and moreover to break the cycle of disadvantage for young people.

Through the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme IRD Duhallow continues to tackle social exclusion for those most disadvantaged and its relevance has been reinforced with the economic downturn experienced recently.

Recognition for Voluntary Service



Don Crowley, Chairman of IRD Duhallow made presentations of paintings by Bernie Buckley to former members of IRD Duhallow Board on their retirements. From left: Nora Dennehy, Community Representative from Western Duhallow; John Moynihan, Business Sector and also former Chairman of IRD Duhallow and Jack Roche, also former Chairman of IRD Duhallow.

Parenting Alone in Duhallow

IRD Duhallow recognises and understands the diversity of family life in Duhallow. Our aim is to ensure that all families are treated equally and have the support they need to raise happy and healthy children. In Duhallow, as is the case nationally, approximately 10% of all households comprise a lone parent with one or more child dependents. Returns from the 2006 Census of Population show a substantial increase in the number of lone parent households headed by a lone father. The structure of family life is becoming ever more varied in Duhallow and an increasing number of children are experiencing family life with their parents living apart. The Duhallow Parenting Alone Support Group provides a support structure for those parenting alone whilst also empowering parents to access their rights and entitlements. The aim of the group is to provide the highest standards of support, to encourage single parents to have the confidence and independence to make their own decisions, to educate people against prejudice and to promote a positive image of one parent families.



Triona Murphy IRD Duhallow Community Development Officer facilitating a PAL support meeting.

Spreading the Word!

Promotional business cards for PAL were designed and produced to promote the groups work and help raise awareness of the PAL support group throughout the Duhallow region, in particular to lone fathers as to date, supports for lone parent families have tended to focus on women. In addition to providing information through the monthly newsletter and local media the promotional cards have been distributed throughout the region to all Public Health Nurses, Community Facilities, Health Centres, Social Welfare Offices and shops.

Childcare Service

From research undertaken by the IRD Duhallow Equality Working group it emerged that childcare was one of the main reasons that one-parent families were unable to access the many supports and opportunities offered to lone parents by IRD Duhallow. As a result quality childcare is provided while parents access the fortnightly meetings, training programmes, information and support. The IRD Duhallow Afterschools service is the hallmark of IRD Duhallow's practical and thoughtful approach to supporting its clients. The parents have peace of mind as their children are cared for in a well planned, stimulating, secure and healthy environment. The service is also of real benefit to the children of the one-parent families on an ongoing basis.



Members of the PAL support group collecting their kids from the IRD Duhallow Afterschools Service.

Peer Support Education Programme

The five week community based "Peer Support Education Programme" was delivered to participants of the PAL Support Group. The programme was designed through a partnership of the HSE and National Learning Network and is very closely aligned with recommendations proposed by 'Reach Out: National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention' (2005).

The aim of the Peer Support Education Programme is to help participants to develop their listening and communication skills so that they might help their children/peers who may be experiencing some difficulty or crisis.

The focus of the programme is around difficult situations posed by suicide and other related issues. The programme was delivered by staff members of IRD Duhallow using the mediums of small group discussions, exercises and the use of role-plays. Positive feedback was received from all who participated with one participant sharing the following: "I have learnt a lot about myself in the past five weeks. I feel more comfortable in silence now and have become a better listener". To facilitate this programme participants had the option of availing of the services of the IRD Duhallow Afterschools for their children. Without this integrated service many parents would not have been able to attend the programme.



Development Officers Peter Desmond and Triona Murphy with participants of the Peer Support Education Programme.

Information Evenings

In response to the identified need by the PAL group an information evening on the Rights and Entitlements of Lone Parents was delivered by Brid Walsh, Citizens Information Office, Mallow. Brid provided information on the a range of benefits and entitlements available to lone parents in Ireland and an overview of important information on legal issues associated with parenting alone i.e. guardianship, maintenance, fathers rights, passports, equality legislation and more.



PAL Promotional Business Cards which have been distributed throughout the Duhallow region.

Parenting Skills Workshops

Three workshops covering the challenges of parenting alone regarding managing children's challenging behaviours were organised. The aim of the workshops was to build parents' confidence and self esteem in their ability to parent effectively. The workshops catered for the varying needs of the group including differing age group concerns, dietary needs of children of all ages and stress management. These aided the parents to establish and re evaluate their own parenting skills and also offered the parents a range of positive behavioural tools empowering them in their role as a parent. Positive pointers were also provided to help their children understand their family situation. Again the Afterschool childcare service contributed in no small way to the success of the project.

Employment & Training

IRD Duhallow's Employment & Training Working Group oversees the delivery of the company's strategic aims and targets with respect to Employment and Training. The Working Group includes representatives from IRD Duhallow, Teagasc, SIPTU, FÁS, VEC, MABS and the Department of Social and Family Affairs who through their expertise assist the delivery and sustainability of employment and training in the Duhallow region. The Working Group reports quarterly to the Board of IRD Duhallow.



At the IRD Duhallow Education and Training Exhibition, Triona Murphy Development Officer was at hand to give information and guidance.

Due to the recent economic downturn there is a significant increase in the number of individuals seeking supports from IRD Duhallow's Employment & Training Centre. IRD Duhallow has a critical role to play in responding to the rapid increase in unemployment. The Job Centre supports individuals in accessing suitable and sustainable employment opportunities, develops training initiatives and provides a free and confidential service to employers in Duhallow.

We target those most distant from the labour market who in the current climate face the greatest challenges in securing employment. Specific strategies are implemented to meet their needs in the areas of education, training, work experience, job placement, welfare entitlements as well as gaining suitable employment in local social economy enterprises and labour market schemes.



Mary Duggan who was placed in employment as a Receptionist with Murphy New Homes, Banteer by IRD Duhallow's Job Centre.



Marie Fuller, Kanturk, on work experience.

The Job Centre provides one to one guidance, supports and information to individuals in seeking access to employment and training opportunities which ultimately enhances their quality of life and employment prospects. This year 352 individuals were assisted in the job seeking process, receiving supports in terms of preparing CV's, interview techniques and advice on different training programmes. The Job Centre has produced and distributed over 3,000 Business Cards to highlight this free service.



Joan O'Connor from Nadd on work experience in IRD Duhallow

The Job Centre serves as an excellent resource for local employers to find the ideal candidate for the position they wish to fill. The Job Centre has an extensive database of several hundred prospective employees. For the employer, we will carefully select and screen candidates from our extensive database.

We proactively prepare shortlists of local candidates for each vacancy ensuring a smooth, accurate and confidential recruitment process. The Job Centre has adopted a role in the promotion of equality awareness among employers where we advise employers in implementing the Employment Equality Act.

Pathfinder

With support from the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme we have available to clients a psychometric testing tool called Career Pathfinder which is used by our clients as a self-completion questionnaire designed to aid career decision-making. Pathfinder is not the solution to all problems; however for individuals unsure about their career or those changing careers, pathfinder is the one tool which may guide them on the right direction. The pathfinder Aptitude Testing Programme uses state of the art personality and aptitude testing methods to create a person's talent profile.

Preparation for Work

Engaging effectively with people who live in remote rural areas and who are spatially and educationally 'hard to reach' can be a significant challenge. This is where the local knowledge and flexibility of local Development Groups like IRD Duhallow really impacts. The following training programmes were successfully delivered and well attended.

FETAC LEVEL 5 Reception Skills, this module was designed to provide learners with the knowledge and skills required to work as a front line representative of any organisation incorporating various practical skills including: Telephone Techniques, Information and Communication Technologies and Customer Services/Relations.

Internet & Email Classes for Beginners, The main aim of the course was to provide Jobseekers to search for work online, to apply for jobs online and to become competent in corresponding online via email. Twenty people completed this course so far this year.



Jerry Sheehan from Laharn developing his internet & email skills.

Employment & Training



Kieran Clifford (Island Computers & Training) with participants of the Internet & Email course which was funded through the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP).

Second Chance Education

Due to the recent economic downturn the number of enquiries we are receiving about both full time and part time further education has more than doubled since the start of 2009. As a result of research undertaken by IRD Duhallow's Employment & Training Working Group it was found that Adults in rural areas have not got the same access to information pertaining to their future careers as Adults living in Urban Areas. In response to this IRD Duhallow hosted **Pathways for Adults 2009** – the only dedicated Education and Training Exhibition for Adults in the Duhallow region. A total of 28 exhibitors were there on the day including UCC, UL, LIT, FÁS, VEC, Mallow College of Further Education and many more. The information day was also a helpful medium to identify local practical and relevant training and support needs in the region.



Brendan Glynn- BTEI Coordinator answering questions at the IRD Duhallow Education & Training Exhibition for Adults.

In addition to the education and training exhibitors there were also representatives from the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA), the Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS), the Citizens Information Office and a Career Guidance Counsellor present on the day to inform individuals about grants/finance options, barriers and supports available if they wished to return to education/training.

Many rural areas are faced with a lack of tertiary education opportunities, due to the peripheral rural location many individuals experience multiple disadvantage coupled with social marginalisation. The availability of Bursaries are critical in facilitating access and entry to education and training opportunities for adults who may not have had the opportunity to continue or complete their education. 2008 saw a number of bursaries awarded to target group individuals returning to second chance education. They received bursaries to progress to various courses including: A Higher Certificate in Applied Addiction Studies, a Diploma in Counselling and a Certificate of Professional Competency.



Donie O'Mahony, Money, Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and Bernie Donohoe, Department of Social and Family Affairs (D.S.F.A) speaking at the IRD Duhallow Social Welfare & Money Management Information Evening.

Social Welfare/Money Management Information Evening for the Unemployed

With the rapid rise in unemployment, new issues and needs are emerging. Many people are experiencing unemployment for the first time. When people lose their jobs they have to find answers to a range of urgent questions as well as dealing with the stress and shock of a major life change. Often they are unfamiliar with the social welfare system and with the supports available. In response to this IRD Duhallow hosted a Social Welfare/Money Management Information Evening for the Unemployed in May. Guest speakers on the night included Bernie Donohoe, Department of Social and Family Affairs and Donie O'Mahony, Money and Budgeting Services, Mallow.



Bernie Donohoe, Department of Social and Family Affairs providing information.

One-Day Motivational Seminar for the Unemployed

Internationally acclaimed motivational speaker and best selling author Kevin Kelly held a series of one-day seminars for the unemployed in venues all over Ireland including Cork with the specific aim of enabling people to recognise and fully exploit their own potential. IRD Duhallow funded a number of unemployed individuals to attend the event and Duhallow Area Rural Transport facilitated this. The Seminar was attended by advisors from local Enterprise Boards and Enterprise Ireland, Accountants, Funding Specialists and Recruitment Agencies who were all available for one to one discussion.



Phil Hallinan & Brendan Murphy outline supports available.

Duhallow Area Rural Transport Programme



Yvonne Brosnan B.A. Information Systems Management, Dip. International Business, Cert. E-Commerce, Cert. Supervisory Management

Appointed in February 2003, Yvonne is responsible for the planning, implementation and overall day-to-day management of the Duhallow Area Rural Transport (DART). She manages the recruitment and supervision of Passenger Assistants and Administration

Staff. She generates reports for Pobal and liaises with community groups for consultation on transport needs.

The Duhallow Area Rural Transport Programme is funded by the Department of Transport Rural Transport Programme through Pobal and is now in its 6th year in operation. Established in April 2003, the RTP in Duhallow branded locally as D.A.R.T – Duhallow Area Rural Transport, has made a huge contribution and is a valuable resource for Older and Younger People, those with disabilities and the rural population.



Patrica Flynn, Banteer, being collected by DART for her weekly trip to Kanturk.



Rockchapel ladies avail of the new DART route to Kanturk.



DART provides a crucial service for Kathleen Driscoll and Dolly McAuliffe

Services

DART operates forty nine services at present. Twenty six services from rural areas in the region to local towns and villages provide a life line for many individuals who want to get their shopping, pension and access other amenities. The Services also acts as a huge social day out for many individuals who are living alone and only for the transport service would not meet people on a day to day basis. DART continues to provide transport to Duhallow Day Care and Millstreet Day Care where clients receive social and medical supports. The DART saw a dramatic increase again in passenger figures soaring to almost 54,000 this year.



DART Passengers rely on the DART service to collect their pension and do their shopping at Rockchapel Post Office every Friday.

The past year has seen more communities in the region playing an even greater part in the transport project. Primary, Post Primary and Youth Clubs have availed of DART services for educational and social outings during the year. DART continues to provide a daily shuttle service from Primary Schools in Newmarket and Lismre to the IRD Duhallow Afterschools which is one of the many advantages of this service for parents, overcoming the barrier that would have prevented many parents from availing of much needed employment outside the home. The DART service provides safe transport for the children and a passenger assistant is always on board. Numbers have increased significantly since its inception and interest is growing from parents with children in other National Schools in the region.

Initially older people were the dominant users of DART but our passenger profile has since expanded addressing the rural transport needs of a number of target groups including youth, women, lone parents, unemployed, foreign nationals, people with disabilities, and school age children, with almost 10,000 set to use DART this year.



Geraldine Murphy, Kiskeam with Eileen Roche DART Passenger Assistant.



Pat Fitzgerald, Maired O'Donoghue, Rosemarie Buckley, Mariana Dimova and Michelle Brosnan avail of DART transport to attend a Seminar in Cork.

DART subcontracts its routes to local hackneys and bus owners in the area. It has sustained twenty three businesses in Duhallow and has generated wealth in local towns and supported business in the region. IRD Duhallow is as always committed to quality standards and in

February of this year subcontractors attended three days of training, MIDAS, PATS and First Aid. Over €1 million has been distributed to subcontractors in the region since the beginning of DART. The continuation of funding from the Department of Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs for the administration staffing of the project and funding from the Department of Social and Family Affairs for holders of Free Travel Pass is vital.



Newmarket National School students Jessica O'Sullivan, Victoria Cottrell and Ava Jennings are collected and taken to the IRD Duhallow After Schools with Yvonne Brosnan, DART Co-ordinator.



Ina Murphy from Lyre receives a helping hand from Eileen Roche, DART Passenger Assistant.

The Social Economy Working Group oversees the operation of DART and reports to the Board of IRD Duhallow quarterly. Following on the Report of our Community Development Working Group on Rural Isolation and its recommendation that transport be put in place to get people out of their houses to shorten the day, the expansion of our pilot night service is the next area which will be prioritised.



Peter O'Sullivan, DART passenger, assisted by Timmy Regan DART Driver and Eileen Roche.



The DART Team (back L-R): Noreen Courtney, Theresa Collins, Eilish Breen, Marie Shire and Vincent McDonnell.

Carers

Duhallow Carers Support Group

In the 2006 Census 1,231 Carers are registered in the Duhallow Region over the age of 15 years, this number represents 5.5% of the overall population aged 15+ years. The national trend is that most Carers are female but in Duhallow 40% are male and 60% are female. The IRD Duhallow Carers Support Group is open to male and female members and especially recognises the importance of reaching out to male Carers and as much as possible reducing the risk of isolation. The vital role the Duhallow Carers Support Group plays in providing a social outlet is highlighted by the fact that Western Duhallow presents the highest level of carers while it is also the most rurally isolated region.



Members of the Duhallow Carers Support Group take time out from being carers and undertake a computer course.

It is estimated that Family Carers contribute over €2.5 billion to the Irish economy every year and every week 3.5 million hours are worked by 161,000 Family Carers across Ireland. It is important that this large section of society is supported through organisations like the IRD Duhallow Carers Support Group.

IRD Duhallow was successful in securing funding from the Pobal Dormant Accounts - *Training for Carers Measure*. Training for Carers is a specific measure under the Social & Economic Disadvantage Category of the Dormant Accounts Fund. This measure is intended to provide funding for locally based training programmes for home carers. The purpose of the initiative is to up-skill carers so that they will be able to provide the best care possible, and also to reduce the risk of injury to the carer and to help them cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of their role.



Carer Kay O'Sullivan learns the basics in an Introductory Computer Class organised by the Duhallow Carers Support Group.

The courses that are being provided by IRD Duhallow are Care in the Home (City and Guilds accredited), Inanimate & Patient Handling, Occupational First Aid, Caring for Children with Special Needs, Personal Development Training, Stress Management (Healthy Lifestyles, Yoga), Dependent Adult Training, and Entitlements for Carers. All the courses are free of charge and are held in The James O'Keefe Institute Newmarket and in our Training Centre in Boherbue.

Through the *Training for Carers Measure*, we are able to deliver high quality training courses to Family Carers and are in a position to genuinely improve the lives of Carers in Duhallow. We aim to establish two more branches of our Duhallow Carers Support Groups in the region in order to meet the huge demand and to have regionally accessible groups as well as those focused on specific needs of particular care categories.



Nora O'Halloran with her son Dan choosing a dvd to watch together on a relaxed night in.



A stitch in time - Dolores Goggin and her daughter Catherine share a common pass-time in knitting together.

In 2008 IRD Duhallow participated in National Carers Week and held a workshop for carers which focused on identifying the affect rurality plays on the needs of carers. The Report produced interesting findings with carers requesting improvements to be made in relation to the availability of respite care in rural areas, the maintenance and availability of equipment such as wheelchairs and lifts, and the lack of a central contact person to ensure rural carers receive all the support that they need from the public sector. This initiative allowed carers to come together and address these issues while also informing new carers of their rights and entitlements.

In response to Carers needs, IRD Duhallow organised Computer Training which introduced participants to basic computer skills and allowed them to become familiar with Microsoft Word, the Internet and e-mailing. These skills can be invaluable to Carers living in rural areas because it gives them the ability to research information on the internet and keep in contact with friends and relatives through e-mail. Being a Carer can be physically and emotionally stressful and in October 2008 a number of the Duhallow Carers took part in an eight week Yoga course which helped them relax, de-stress and keep fit.

The Duhallow Carers Support Group is active and through its monthly meetings is providing great support to its members where over a cup of tea they socialise, organise events and training courses and share experiences and helpful information. The meetings provide great emotional and practical support to Carers and attendance is growing in number as the reputation of the group spreads.



Breeda Lehane at home in Kiskeam with her son Kieran whom she cares for.

IRD Duhallow Carers Support Group links with Caring For Carers Ireland

IRD Duhallow has developed strong links with Caring for Carers Ireland which is a national Non Governmental Organisation that supports both the carer and the person being cared for. The Duhallow Carers Support Group encourages carers to care for themselves and not just the person they care for and Caring For Carers Ireland reinforces this belief by promoting the health, wellbeing and quality of life of the family carer through respite, training, advocacy etc. Caring for Carers Ireland is also part of EUROCARERS, which is a European Network that provides informal care provision to carers. IRD Duhallow is currently exploring the possibility of undertaking an interterritorial project through the LEADER Programme to link the Duhallow Carers Group with other carer groups in Ireland and in Europe with the aim of exchanging information, promoting education and lifelong learning and developing good practice in informal care provision.



Marie O'Callaghan at home with her mother Hannah, whom she cares for. Marie also works 15 hours service a week with our Afterschools Service

Youth and Education

IRD Duhallow's Youth and Education Working Group has a broad cross sectoral membership including representatives of youth organisations, local primary and second level schools, members of Parents Associations as well as local clergy and Gardai. The Group aims to work with partners in Duhallow to deliver on IRD Duhallow's strategic aims and targets to promote the holistic, social, personal, and educational development of our young people. The programmes initiated and developed seek to cater for young people, in and out of school, from pre-school to third level education within a core value of promoting social inclusion.



Daniel Roche, Banteer, Winner of the Newmarket Motors Driving Ambition Bursary Awards for second level students with TG4 personality Daithi O'Se and Munster rugby star Tony Buckley. Daniel has gone on to study Law and Accounting in U.L.



Rebecca Larkin from Mourneabbey receives a presentation from Minister for Education Batt O'Keeffe and Annette Browne of Newmarket Motors at the Driving Ambition Bursary Awards. Rebecca is studying to be a Primary School Teacher in M.I.C.

Dyslexia

The Duhallow Dyslexia Support group was established by IRD Duhallow to focus on the needs of children and their parents and to provide help and advice for parents whose children have a learning difficulty. Special workshops are organised during the school term with the Dyslexia Summer Camp running in August to prepare children for returning to school in September. This year for the first time workshops for 2nd level pupils are being delivered in IRD Duhallow's computer training centre. A number of courses are run for parents to equip them to support their child's learning difficulty



Vera Leader tutor on the TTRS project for children with learning difficulties assists a student at the IRD Duhallow Computer Training facility.

and to minimise the effect dyslexia has on the child's life. A subject support course for parents was run to help parents understand how best to assist their children with Maths and English homework. An information evening was held to increase awareness of dyslexia and to provide parents with information on the social and academic supports available for children in primary, secondary, and third level education. Colaiste Treasa in Kanturk provides a literacy homework support club for students with funding from the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.

TTRS

Touch Type Read and Spell is a computer package designed to help people overcome literacy difficulties such as Dyslexia. The programme is specifically designed to develop reading, writing, spelling, touch typing skills, self esteem and motivation in pupils. Having funded a youth focused 15 PC computer facility through LEADER+; we were ideally placed to pilot this innovative programme. Classes are at full capacity and are run every Friday in IRD Duhallow's Afterschools computer training centre in Newmarket. The programme is proving popular with young students.



Meelin National School debating team explored the Green Party proposal to tax text messages at the IRD Duhallow National School Debating competition.

Transition from Secondary – Third Level Education

An information evening was organised on the CAO application process and the course options of the various educational institutions in response to the demand from parents. The purpose of the initiative was to make students and parents feel at ease about the transition to Third level, which for the majority of Duhallow families means the child has to move away from home, which can be an additional stress on families. It supported them in making informed decisions about their choice of course, college, and their future. A Career Guidance expert explained the different levels of FETAC and HETAC qualifications and was at hand to answer parents and students queries. The initiative also highlighted support structures in place for third level students.



Vera Leader, Resource Teacher and Lorraine Gallagher, AHEAD giving information and advice to Parents at the Dyslexia Information Night.

Social & Personal Development Programme

A number of initiatives were run in the past year to inform and help Duhallow youth to deal with issues that may affect them as they grow up. An information evening dealing with internet safety and privacy and the potential dangers of social networking sites was held and was received very well by parents and young people. Two Drive Safe for Life seminars were delivered during the year, one for secondary school children and the other for parents of children who have, or are about to reach driving age.

Millennium Partnership Fund (MPF)

IRD Duhallow delivers the MPF which provides assistance for students to overcome financial difficulties and remain in further or higher education. IRD Duhallow is part of Cork Consortium headed up by Cork City Partnership. This year, we awarded 29 bursaries to local students. IRD Duhallow also provided bursaries to eight students through the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.

Early School Leavers Programme

Last year, we ran a pilot programme identifying students who have potential to achieve but who are at risk of leaving school early. Students attended career and life coaching workshops that focussed on goal setting, career choice, motivation and self esteem. They also participated in a teamwork and confidence building activity day in Kilfinane Outdoor Education Centre. They visited Tralee Community College, FÁS Training Centre and Tralee Institute of Technology. This gave them the chance to see first hand the opportunities that were available to them and the valuable supports that exist at third level.



Garda John Crowley, Jack Roche IRD Duhallow, Pat McNeely Bayside Services, Marie Cronin Headway and Garda Thomas Moynihan at the Drive Safe for Life seminar on road safety targeted at young drivers.

Youth and Education

Youth Clubs

Through LDSIP we have again supported a number of youth clubs in the past year. Donoughmore, Newmarket, Lismire, Kanturk and Dromtariffe have all received funding for training and equipment. Donoughmore Basketball Club has also received capital funding to enhance its club and facilities. Through the LEADER 2007-2013 programme communities will be supported to establish a number of youth cafes in strategic locations in Duhallow.

Log on, Learn

This was the first year the Youth and Education Working Group partnered with Coláiste Treasa on an inter-generational project involving *Sinsir*, the Castlemagner Active Retirement Club. The *Log on, Learn* initiative is sponsored by An Post in partnership with Intel and Microsoft and involves senior citizens pairing up with transition year students for eight weekly one to one sessions, learning basic email, internet and computer skills. The project was a great success with everyone involved benefiting through the exchange of knowledge and life skills.



Winners of the IRD Duhallow Debating competition, now in its second year are Meelin National School girls, (L-R) Emma Browne, Niamh Brosnan, Jaya Collins and Heather Langan with (L-R) Don Crowley, Peter Desmond, Maura Walsh IRD Duhallow, Kit McAuliffe, Principal Celine Doody, Moira O'Connor, Mary Dennehy, Joe O'Carroll and Noeleen Buckley who adjudicated on the night.



Kanturk National School pupils, (L-R) Cillian Meehan, Bryan O'Connor, Jack Bradley and Shane McSweeney who were runner ups in the Debating competition final with Don Crowley & Eileen Linehan IRD Duhallow, Teachers Mary Angland, Deirdre Linehan, Principal Peadar O'Callaghan, Mary Boyce and medals sponsor Joe Carroll.

E-Pal Project

At the beginning of this year seven rural primary schools in Duhallow (Cloghoul, Derrinagree, Kilcorney, Carriganima, Rathduane, Knockclarig and Cullen) came together with the help of an IRD Duhallow training grant and set up a local national school E-Pal cluster, a follow on from the successful LEADER+ Schola cluster. This means the students can communicate with each other through email and webcam and can share their knowledge and experiences of national school projects such as The Green Flags environmental initiative, the Discover Primary Science initiative and the healthy eating Health Promoting School initiative. Now that the E-Pal Project is established in this small cluster locally the schools will twin with other schools/clusters nationally and ultimately internationally. This is a great opportunity for the young children of Duhallow to primarily train in computer communications and then to share cultural, social and learning experiences around the world.

Summer Camps

IRD Duhallow funded a number of summer camps in rural communities last summer. The purpose of these social inclusion camps is to provide children from disadvantaged families and rurally isolated communities the opportunity to participate in summer camps in their local areas.



Noeleen Buckley presents the best speaker award at the IRD Duhallow Debating Competition final to Cillian Meehan, Kanturk BNS.

Afterschools Homework Support

The working group continues to support four Duhallow secondary schools to provide afterschools homework support service targeted at those children most at risk of early school leaving. The service is run in the schools with teachers supervising. It provides students with the opportunity to gain extra help with homework and further develop social skills.

Newmarket After Schools Service

The Newmarket After School Service established and operated by IRD Duhallow, is now in its 4th year and provides both an after schools during school term and out of schools service for school age children during the mid term and summer holidays. The Duhallow Area Rural Transport service ensures that children are collected from schools and dropped to the facility safely. It provides an invaluable service to parents as it operates a tiered pricing system through the National Childcare Subvention Scheme and allows parents to continue to work and pursue training opportunities while their children are in a safe environment receiving homework support along with a variety of educational programmes, competitions, games, activities, and a home cooked meal.

Youth Information

In September 2008 a Career, College and Employment Exhibition was organised in the Edel Quinn Hall in Kanturk. The exhibition was a huge success and was attended by students, early school leavers and parents. A range of colleges, employers, a career guidance professional and recruitment specialist were on hand to provide valuable advice and information on further education and career choices.

Active Citizenship

Active Citizenship workshops were delivered by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice in the five secondary schools of Duhallow where transition year students were educated in democracy and the importance of voting.

Public Speaking Competition

Following the success of last years pilot of the Duhallow National Schools Public Speaking Competition, which involved four National Schools from Duhallow, this year the Youth and Education Working Group opened the competition up to all Primary Schools in the area. The first heat was held in Bruach na Carraige Rockchapel in May and the second in The James O'Keeffe Institute. The two nights were a great success with both venues filled to capacity. Competing in the final for the IRD Duhallow Perpetual Trophy in The Glen Theatre were Freemount, Derrinagree, Meelin and Kanturk BNS. The Youth and Education Working Group is very excited with the high standard of public speaking and the enthusiasm of all the schools involved and acknowledges the Principals, teachers, pupils and parents for their hard work and support.



Kanturk Basketball Club has gone from strength to strength. Funding from the LDSIP Programme under the youth clubs action allowed them to purchase an electronic score board enabling them to attract games to their home town.

Equality, Disability & Migrants

The Equality Working Group promotes greater respect for the person and for diversity, equality and cultural difference. Our core work focuses on gender, marital status, family status, age, disability and race. IRD Duhallow promotes equality to create a fairer, tolerant and caring society where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Treating people as individuals and placing positive value on diversity in the community and in the workforce are our priorities. The Working Group is chaired by Michael Doyle and reports quarterly to the Board.



Children of all nationalities enjoying the Multicultural Christmas Days in Kanturk and Millstreet with Santa & Mrs Claus, RSS Participants Dermot Murphy & Mary Golden.

Social Centres for New Communities

In-migration from Central and Eastern Europe over the past 5 years has been hugely significant in halting Duhallow's demographic decline. In order to engage with and build the participation and support structures for foreign nationals who are living and working in the Duhallow area, IRD Duhallow has established two Social Centres in Kanturk and in Rathmore. They operate weekly and the visits have doubled from 295 to 540. They serve as a social outlet, where migrant workers receive and share information about their rights and entitlements, public services, local social activities or just meet, chat and exchange experiences. Duhallow Integration of Non-Nationals (DION Network) presents a community based structure, to enhance representation, participation, capacity and advocacy. It empowers and enables the Immigrant Community in Duhallow to develop skills and supports them to participate fully in the local labour market and community development structures. Due to the economic downturn the number of foreign nationals using the services of the Job Centre has also dramatically increased.

One to one meetings with our Integration Officer are organised at our offices in Newmarket. The main issues include Information on Social Welfare, Education and Training, CV preparation and Job Centre services and Rights and Entitlements on different aspects of living in Ireland.



Irish and Foreign National children and their parents attend the Multicultural Christmas Day in Millstreet.

Integration Initiatives

In conjunction with our social centres and support from the Integration Fund the Equality Working Group organised several integration and social events where all communities were welcome.



Kanturk St. Patrick's Day Parade participants.

An Integration Fun Day brought 59 parents and children together from different nationalities and ability to speak English. The day was a fantastic way to bring all strands of the community together. It helped to promote equality and diversity at an early stage and to eliminate the risk of prejudice in the future. The objective of the event was to allow children to have a better understanding of each other and integrate through entertainment and participation in a range of novel activities and games. These type of activities promote equality of opportunity, good relations and integration.

The year 2009 was inaugurated by the highly successful visit of the Garda Concert Band to Kanturk. The concert was held in conjunction with the Garda Ethnic and Diversity Group from the West Cork Division of which IRD Duhallow's Integration Officer is a member. This excellent event was attended by 650 people including the host and immigrant communities. During the night Superintendent Martin Dorney outlined how important it is to promote and embrace ethnic diversity in the community.

Cross cultural events are important to create best inter-community relations and co-operation. This year a large group of Foreign Nationals representing mainly Eastern European countries participated in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Kanturk. Participation for this festive day and the biggest Irish festival was preceded by a number of meetings where all immigrants prepared colourful posters, national symbols and flags, which were enthusiastically presented during the parade.



A Group of Foreign Nationals with Michael Doyle, Chairman of the Equality Working Group join in the Kanturk St. Patrick's Day Parade along with Sean Linehan, Dromagh.

Integration is a two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents. It is also important that the host community gain knowledge about different cultures that they are surrounded by. Polish is the largest minority group in the Duhallow area. The Equality Working Group identified the demand for information about Polish culture and history and organised a workshop which was held in Kanturk. Everybody had the opportunity to participate and learn more about Polish symbols, regions and authorities, famous people, tourist areas, traditions and customs. A traditional Polish meal was available for everyone to taste. The day was very successful and the Equality Working Group received very positive feedback and as a follow-up to the excellent response the Working Group organised Interactive Polish Classes.

Equality, Disability & Migrants

Connecting Communities Through Sport

Sport is often the key to linking communities together. A project to promote interculturalism through sport was undertaken with funding from Kerry Local Sports Partnership through the National Plan Against Racism (NPAR) funds. The sport's festival was organised in Rathmore and different sporting games were presented on the day such as soccer, basketball and tug of war. The Old Road Walk in Rathmore was organised thanks to assistance of the Sliabh Luachra Hill Walking Club. Children enjoyed face painting as well as Soccer Skills and Gaelic Football training provided by the GAA on the day. Everyone, regardless of age or nationality had a chance to take part in a number of different sports and activities. Representatives from local sports clubs were on hand to give guidance on the different sports, encouraging all to participate and join their clubs.



Children who participated in the Kerry Sports P'Ship Soccer Skills Training during Sport's Day in Rathmore with Darren Aherne of the FAI and Kasia Krol Integration Officer IRD Duhallow.

Multi-Cultural Community Days

Multicultural events created opportunities for supporting and networking migrant communities as well as encouraging interculturalism. In 2008 the Working Group organized three Multi-Cultural Days, which were held in Kanturk, Rathmore and Millstreet. This was the fourth such event organised by IRD Duhallow's Equality Working Group and was enthusiastically attended by different nationalities. Multicultural Christmas Days always create a special atmosphere and proved once again to be a fantastic mechanism for bringing local and global cultures together. Thanks to the Rural Social Scheme for providing Santa and Mrs Clause.

Apart from Eastern European workers Duhallow has Millstreet Accommodation Centre in Drishane Castle which is home to 300 people from 26 countries including Iraq, Pakistan, India, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kosovo, Israel, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Somalia and Zimbabwe! Owned by Thomas Duggan and managed professionally it is an excellent facility in an idyllic setting. It brings back to life Drishane Castle, which was home to Infant Jesus Sisters who went from Drishane to set up schools and hospitals in the Far East. Now people come from all over the world to seek refuge there. IRD Duhallow has worked closely with Drishane and supported a Summer BBQ for the entire community and hosted by the residents.



Halima Usman from Nigeria samples African cuisine at the Multicultural Food Event in Kanturk.



Leslaw Nieznanski from Poland with Nana and Annabel from Ghana with their babies at the Multicultural Food Event in Kanturk.

Disability Supports

IRD Duhallow supports groups for people with disabilities to create greater awareness of ability among the wider community in Duhallow.



Rachel O'Connell and Laura O'Sullivan at the Integration Fun Day in Kanturk.

In October the Equality Working Group organised a one day Disability Awareness Workshop for a wide audience of the community, employers and service providers like The Gardaí, HSE, Social Welfare Officers, Community Workers and Bank Officials. The Disability awareness workshop programme is delivered in order to communicate more effectively with people with disabilities in the Duhallow region. It is designed to ensure that all community groups, employers, employees and different public services can interact more effectively with people with disabilities. It offered the opportunity to explore disability related issues, share experiences and ask questions.



From L to R: Monika Mocarska, Katarzyna Domalik, Urszula Zielinska, F. Marceli and Grazyna Michalak at the Social Centre in Rathmore.



Magic Chris entertains the children during Integration Fun Day in Kanturk.

Sign Language Classes were organised for the third time. This project supported 15 individuals in the Duhallow area wishing to learn the skill of basic sign language. The training helped participants with an understanding of the deaf community and the conventions associated with communication in sign language. It is the aim of IRD Duhallow to promote the right of every person to enjoy an equality of opportunity in all aspects of life to develop full independence and citizenship.



Kasia Król, Integration Officer with representatives of an Garda Síochána and John Fuller, Immigration Officer at the Garda Band Concert, Kanturk.



Huge attendance at The Multicultural Food Event in Kanturk.

Mental Health and Transition to Employment

Mental Health Promotion

Mental Health Promotion has been the focus of IRD Duhallow's response to addressing the needs of those with disabilities and is part of the work of our Equality Working Group. Duhallow Mental Health Well Being Week reached out to individuals in the community with the message that it's okay to talk about your mental health. A two-day Personal Development Programme was organised for people with mental ill health who participated on our Towards Occupation Programme. AWARE's Beat the Blues programme was delivered in 3 Secondary Schools in Duhallow. It raised the awareness of young people about depression and mood disorder, the treatments available, and to nurture a more positive attitude to dealing with mental illness. A large number of community representatives took part in the 2 day I ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills) workshops which IRD Duhallow hosted in conjunction with the HSE. Suicide can be prevented through the actions of others just as "CPR" skills make physical first aid possible; training in suicide intervention develops the skills used in suicide first aid.



Elsie McDonnell, Sliabh Luachra Florists helping Rachel King with her Christmas wreath.

Peer Support Education Programme

Two of IRD Duhallow's Development Officers have been trained as facilitators of the Peer Support Education Programme which was developed as a community response to suicide in the belief that peers may talk to each other first, before approaching any professional services on offer in the region. Our trained Development Officers are now rolling out the programme to different target groups in the region beginning with the Parenting Alone Group (PAL). The participants feel empowered to make a difference in the lives of others who may be experiencing any kind of difficulty and who are in need of support.

Since its foundation in 1985, **AWARE** has been supporting those with depression and their families, and helping to dispel the myths and misunderstandings of this illness. IRD Duhallow has been working energetically to re invigorate the Duhallow AWARE Support Group. 16 volunteers are currently being trained by Bec Fahey, regional manager of AWARE in Cork/Kerry. The support group will meet weekly throughout the year.



Tim Galvin working diligently on his Christmas wreath.



Linda Murphy, participant of the Creative Art Classes.

Jigsaw

In conjunction with the other LEADER Partnerships in Kerry an application was made to Headstrong (The National Centre for Youth Mental Health) with a view to becoming a pilot site for a Jigsaw Project. Jigsaw is a community based system of care that supports young people aged 12-25 to achieve better mental health and wellbeing. A broad range of stakeholders including IRD Duhallow were contacted by North Kerry Together and brought together to form a Planning Group in Kerry. A needs analysis was undertaken and planning meetings were held. The research undertaken by Jigsaw Kerry has highlighted the stresses and pressures that young people are under, and the mental health problems including suicide which can result. From this a Steering Group was set up and a Youth Advisory Panel formed (YAPs Group). The business plan was completed a number of months ago and is based around 7 strategies. IRD Duhallow is committed to the development of this project over the coming months. As an organisation working with young people, being a partner in Jigsaw Kerry will enable us to optimise the supports we currently provide in order to create a supportive environment which will benefit the mental health of young people in the Duhallow region.

Acquired Brain Injury Open Day

IRD Duhallow partnered with the Peter Bradley Foundation in hosting an open day in the James O'Keeffe Institute during Acquired Brain Injury Week. The aim of the open day was to connect with ABI sufferers and Carers in Duhallow and connect them to the services that are available to them locally.



Triona Murphy Development Officer with participants of the Towards Occupation Programme enjoying a cup of tea.

Towards Occupation Programme (TO)

The TO provides community-based support to individuals experiencing mental ill health in Duhallow funded mainly through the Department of Social and Family Affairs and LDSIP. With an emphasis on social inclusion, the programme enables the individual to take on a meaningful and satisfying social role in society and prepares them for further education, training and employment. This programme is a partnership programme delivered by Ballyhoura Development, Avondhu Blackwater Partnership, IRD Duhallow and more recently West Limerick Resources, through an innovative combination of training, guidance and support.

Mental Health and Transition to Employment

The partnership approach to the implementation of this programme - built on trust, cooperation, and commitment-is integral to its success. Incorporating the learning of the Transition to Employment Options programme (TEO), and the message of *A Vision for Change*, the **Towards Occupation** programme continues to support those in the community experiencing mental ill-health. The programme is committed to the principal of recovery – that it is possible for participants to achieve control over their own lives, to recover their self-esteem and move towards building a life where they experience a sense of belonging and participation.

The initiative in Duhallow this year involved the delivery of 5 different modules to 27 participants, all of whom are also long-term unemployed. The aim of the devised programme was to draw upon their creativity, to develop their individual and group skills, the former through enhanced communication and interpersonal skills and the latter through peer interaction and teamwork.



Robert Hyde participating in a Beginners Computer course.

The Programme was delivered in our Boherbue Training Centre on a part time basis and was supported by Duhallow Area Rural Transport, which was vital for the participants accessing the programme. Counselling Support was a valuable addition to the programme, and five participants availed of this opportunity. This support was provided by Eileen Ryan, local Counsellor and also Kathleen Dennehy who received a bursary through LDSIP and gave her time to support this group in return. We have learnt that diversity in the levels of mental health difficulties of participants leads to a more positive group dynamic and, ultimately, a more productive programme. This includes participants that struggle with low self-esteem and self-confidence, or other personal barriers, in addition to those with formally diagnosed mental ill-health. Progression is a very gradual process and support must be available on a sustained basis. The delivery of formulated training is the most successful method of engaging with participants initially. It is the continued availability of support during and following completion of a programme that succeeds in progressing participants, however incrementally.



Alan Pitcher and Sarah Evans, Secret Gardens with participants of the Beginners Gardening Course.

In the absence of open market job opportunities, participants of the Towards Occupation Programme 2008-2009 desperately need community based employment opportunities, which would provide flexible working arrangements to meet their individual needs. Flexibility of work hours is vitally important to allow for continued contact with health services and encourage ongoing home care support. A dearth of suitable occupational opportunities in rural areas prevents many from participating fully in society and satisfying their occupational needs. Sustainable opportunities are required, such as the Community Services Programmes (CSP). If successful in the CSP application to fund an innovative furniture recycling and reuse initiative, it is our aim to provide job opportunities and training for upwards of twenty people most distant from the labour market in Duhallow.



Michael Keane, participant of the Creative Art Classes

In addition to the forecast and expected outcomes from the Programme there were many additional benefits experienced by participants. These additional benefits amount to a general improvement in the quality of life of participants and include HSE clients requiring less services; physical improvements in health; increased socialisation, friendships formed; personal independence, structure returning to lives; increased confidence; hope and possibilities to aspire to.

All relevant State Agencies were approached for Support of this worthwhile initiative. IRD Duhallow would like to thank the Department of Social and Family Affairs who co-funded the programme, the management and staff of Kanturk and Psychiatric Day Care Centre, Community Health Nurses, Local GP's and the Clergy for their continued support and help in promoting the programme.



Local artist Bertie Buckley gives Tim Galvin a helping hand with his painting.

Bereavement Support

IRD Duhallows volunteer led Bereavement Support Group continues to provide an invaluable free and confidential service in the Duhallow region. Trained volunteers provide both a one to one and group listening service to people who have been bereaved or experienced a loss such as separation or divorce. People are able to avail of this service who may not necessarily avail of other supports due to issues such as financial constraints or geographical location. The volunteers continue to undertake training and attend workshops to ensure that they provide the best service they can. To raise awareness on the support that the group provides, IRD Duhallow with LDSIP funding produced Brochures and leaflets. The volunteers undertook a publicity drive distributing leaflets and posters throughout the region in an effort to reach as many people as possible. Our volunteers have recently been trained to deliver the Rainbows Programme which is a peer-support programme to assist children and youths who are grieving a death, separation or other painful transition in their family.



Maura Walsh presents Carmel Coleman with a token of appreciation after many years of volunteering with the IRD Duhallow Bereavement Support Group.

Duhallow Community Food Services



ORLAITH TOMKINS DCFS Manager

Orlaith Tomkins was appointed Manager of DCFS in January 2008. She graduated from GMIT in 1994 with a Degree in Hotel and Catering Management. Over the past number of years she has gained experience in the hospitality and food industry in a number of different roles. Last year she completed a Management of Food Hygiene course and is a registered trainer with the HSE.

The role and function of Duhallow Community Food Services is to provide a subsidised meal service to those who are not in a position to cook for themselves, primarily the elderly and those that are ill or recovering from an illness living in rural areas.



Manager Orlaith Tomkins with Supervisors Donal Lynch, Louise McBride, Rose Drew and Mary O'Connell reviewing the checklist for the day ahead.

Last year saw an increase of 4,000 on the number of meals delivered bringing the total to over 17,000. Louise McBride is the supervisor in the meals unit, which has a target of 20,000 meals this year. This has resulted in the creation of two new full time and one part time job. Staff get exposure in different areas of the business to learn new skills and to gain confidence and develop new competencies. The team members are committed to providing wholesome, nutritious meals and an efficient, timely service for people with many different dietary requirements.



Moirá Murphy prepares a hot meal in the production unit with Eileen Scannell in the background giving a helping hand.



Rose Drew preparing bread in the bakery unit of DCFS for sale in local shops.

The majority of meals are delivered directly to the individual's door, piping hot or chilled for those that wish to re heat their meal later in the day. Catering is also provided to community centres on a weekly basis. DCFS currently caters for Banteer, Kiskeam, Meelin and Rockchapel where the elderly can enjoy a meal in the company of their friends.

Co-ordinating the delivery of over 90 meals to clients with differing requirements is a difficult task and was overseen by Donal Lynch until his well deserved retirement recently. The centre operates 4 routes on a daily basis. The loading and departure of the delivery vehicles must be done in an efficient and timely manner to ensure all customers are catered for within the shortest possible time frame to ensure our customers are happy and to work within the constraints of food safety legislation.

The bakery unit continues to provide fresh products to local retail outlets. Rose Drew the supervisor and her team develop and grow the range of items available on the market. The revenue generated is essential in offsetting the costs in the meals unit. The Food Centres' outside catering service has proven to be a great success. There is a wide selection of savoury and sweet items available, the team also offer assistance with menu planning and selection and are happy to fulfil special requests. This facility is used regularly for family occasions and private functions including Communion, Confirmation, Christenings and Birthday and Anniversary Parties.

DCFS provides catering for the Comprehensive School in Boherbue since April 2008. In line with the government's policy on healthy eating in schools, the strategy at the centre is to ensure that students have access to healthy food and drinks, produced locally using only fresh high quality ingredients.

Mary O'Connell (RSS) and her team are responsible for this area of the business. The revenue generated through this line is of huge importance to assist in the funding of the meals service, while also providing a valuable service to the young people of Duhallow.



Mary O'Connell checking the list of people who benefit from a meal delivered to their own homes.

DCFS is managed by the Board of IRD Duhallow through the Social Economy Working Group. It is with their commitment coupled with that of the staff that the project is flourishing. We are very grateful to the Community Services Programme for providing funding; this provides 12 Job opportunities to people often excluded from the labour market. The Rural Social Scheme supplements the CSP team with participants who are engaged in driving and deliveries as well as production and administration. Training and development of the staff is of major importance to ensure quality standards are maintained, throughout the operation. A variety of courses and training programmes including First Aid and Food Hygiene which are run by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland were organised. The centre works closely with the National Learning Network providing placements for individuals on this programme. We are also indebted to the HSE for the grant aid; this assists greatly in the provision of the service and helps us maintain the cost of the service at an affordable price to the customer.

DCFS is indebted to the volunteers who give their time so generously when assisting with deliveries in Boherbue and at Community Centres throughout Duhallow and to the Public Health Nurses, local Clergy, GP's and community representatives for their ongoing referrals.



DCFS's Rural Meal Service allows people to stock up meals over the weekends.



Danny O'Donoghue arrives at dinner time to deliver a hot meal to an elderly community member.

Women and Childcare

The Women and Childcare Working Group address issues affecting the lives of women in the Duhallow region through a number of IRD Duhallow supported tailored supports and measures. The working group aims to improve the economic, social and cultural lives of women in the Duhallow region and strives to promote and enhance quality affordable childcare in Duhallow.



Some of the students having fun in the IRD Duhallow After Schools with staff member Eileen O'Riordan during a cookery class.

Childcare

Following the successful establishment of 7 community childcare facilities, the women and childcare working group supports the local voluntary committees with the issues they face. In the past year we have held a number of meetings with the local community providers to address growing concern over the guidelines attached to the National Childcare Investment Programme, Childcare Subvention Scheme and the newly announced Early Childcare Care and Education Scheme. Many facilities are finding it difficult to come to grips with the requirements of the programmes and with top up grants decreasing next year and disappearing in 2011, achieving sustainability against the backdrop of economic downturn is key to survival for these community facilities.



Keeping the head down! Patrick Browne doing his maths homework during study time at IRD Duhallow's After Schools.



Ann McMahon, Staff Member of IRD Duhallow's After Schools assists Ben O'Sullivan with his spelling, while friends Rachael and Clodagh help each other with their reading.

Play Therapy

Therapeutic Play Workshops were organised in order to enhance the variety of skills of childcare staff. Participants developed an insight into the world of a child and explored play as a central part of the child's way of understanding their world. Basic puppet skills and therapeutic story telling were some of the topics covered in the workshop.



Eileen Linehan IRD Duhallow with Minister Máire Hootor, Department of Health & Children, Jack Roche IRD Duhallow and Mamo McDonald Age & Opportunity at the Duhallow Women's Forum Conference.

Parent & Toddler Groups

Parent and toddler groups help counter disadvantage and rural isolation by providing an outlet for parents to meet and interact and a facility for children to play and integrate with other children from a range of different backgrounds. IRD Duhallow supports local groups to establish parent and toddler groups and existing groups to enhance their facilities by providing small scale equipment grants and training. Duhallow now has thirteen Parent & Toddler Groups in the region who participate in the Women's Forum.



Participants of the Career Compass Programme receive guidance from tutor Brid O'Brien.

Duhallow Womens Forum

Now in its 12th year, the Duhallow Women's Forum continues to actively promote the setting up of new womens groups in the Duhallow area as well as supporting existing groups. In 2008 two personal development courses were organised focusing on developing listening skills, confidence building, assertiveness skills and self esteem.

Forum AGM

The theme of the Forums AGM in 2008 was 'Womens Health' with The Marie Keating Mobile Unit located at the James O'Keeffe Institute to raise awareness on cancer and to promote early detection and treatment. Aoife Collins from 'Breast Check' was the guest speaker on the night and provided invaluable information to the audience.

Mna Dhuthalla

In September 2008 Ballydesmond native Nora Herlihy, Founder of the Credit Union Movement in Ireland was honoured in a celebration of the 50 years of the Irish Credit Union Movement. Irish League of Credit Unions President Uel Adair performed a wreath laying ceremony and unveiled a plaque in Ballydesmond in her honour. Former ILCU President and Noble Prize Winner John Hume added that Nora Herlihy was the founder of the most successful co-operative movement in Irish history with 521 credit unions in Ireland today. Great community support was evident at the two events in both Ballydesmond and Rathmore Credit Union with young and old present to acknowledge the legacy of a remarkable Ballydesmond woman. 2009 marks the centenary of Nora Herlihy's birth and the Women's Forum are undertaking a project which will see the publication of a book of essays on topics relevant to her life and legacy.



John Hume Former SDLP Leader and Credit Union Activist with Maura Walsh Manager of IRD Duhallow attending the event in Ballydesmond.

In October 2008 the Forum honoured The Venerable Edel Quinn, Legion of Mary Missionary who also featured in the Mna Duhallow Calendar. The Edel Quinn Hall in Kanturk proved the most apt location for this conference with over 250 people attending the event. Minister Máire Hootor, Department of Health & Children opened this conference and keynote speakers included Mary Murphy from the Legion of Mary, Mamo McDonald Honary President of Age & Opportunity, Stephen Kelly of the HSE, Don Crowley Chairman IRD Duhallow and Maura Walsh Manager. Edel Quinn's Legacy and the Role of the Legion of Mary was presented on the day with a standing ovation given to Mamo McDonald for her honest and inspiring account of how as a woman in rural Ireland she fought against rural isolation over the years and battled for equal rights. This conference demonstrated how communities hold the key to ensuring that rural isolation is tackled though the support of its biggest asset; its local people.



Colm Burke from the European Parliament joins the large crowd in attendance, at the Duhallow Women's Forum Conference 'Tackling Rural Isolation...The Role of Community Volunteers'.



Judy O'Leary presents a flower arrangement to Minister Máire Hootor following the launch of the Report on the Needs of Older People in Duhallow at the Duhallow Women's Forum Conference.

Tourism and Culture

Sustainable Tourism Development

IRD Duhallow's LEADER plan for 2007-2013 acknowledges the opportunities that Duhallow's natural and cultural resources present, especially in terms of rural tourism and point to the achievements already achieved under the LEADER programme. We will continue to support forms of accommodation such as hostel, self catering and B&B which will capitalise on the cultural heritage of the region and offer new opportunities for involvement in the accommodation provision by farm families.



L-R Eileen Linehan, IRD Duhallow, Fran Igoe and Suzanne Campion of the Southern Regional Fisheries Board, Michael Twohig, Maura Walsh, and Patrick Fitzpatrick, IRD Duhallow, discussing the habitat of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel.

Angling Tourism in Duhallow

The Duhallow region is the birthplace of the Munster Blackwater and the Feale which are noted as two of Ireland's prime trout and salmon angling rivers. The 55Km stretch of the Blackwater flowing through Duhallow has the potential to be further developed for angling purposes. Over the course of the LEADER programme we will promote Duhallow as a centre of angling excellence based on supporting river and lake angling. A number of angling and leisure groups in Duhallow will avail of funding to restore the river banks, deepen river pools, renovate and construct foot bridges and styles in conjunction with National Parks & Wildlife and the Fisheries Board.

Freshwater Pearl Mussel Conservation

Kanturk Angling Club has done major regeneration work of its waters. With the support of a feasibility grant under the LEADER programme the club is investigating the habitat of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the local Blackwater tributaries, primarily the Allow River which has been included in the Blackwater River SAC.



In danger of extinction - The Freshwater Pearl Mussel.

International Fly Fishing Championship – Ladies Net Gold

The Ladies International Fly Fishing Championship was held on Lough Lein, Killarney where teams from Ireland, England, Scotland & Wales competed. It marked a truly historic event for the Irish Team which included local Duhallow woman Ann McWilliams who achieved their first ever win in the 18 year involvement with this International event.



Ladies 'Net' Gold. Irish Anglers Anne McWilliams Lady Captain (left) and Mary Dunne (right) winners of the Ladies International Fly-Fishing competition with Angler guide Richard Willis on Lough Lein, Killarney.



Members of Millstreet Youth Club enjoying abseiling and canoeing at Ballyhass lakes.

Ballyhass Lakes

Using the natural assets of the area and a feasibility study undertaken with LEADER II support, Ballyhass lakes and its angling and activity centre at its 36 acre base in Ballyhass was developed on the site of a disused quarry and has proved to be a huge success. The lakes are a perfect environment for rainbow trout and attracts 5,000 rod angling days per year. Eleven, four star holiday homes are on site in Ballyhass and its activity centre has a range of activities such as rock climbing, abseiling, kayaking, raft building, archery and canoeing. With financial support from LEADER 07-13, Ballyhass Lakes has built a climbing wall and developed indoor floor activities.



Michael Doyle, IRD Duhallow accompanied by Yoshikazu Kitajima on a tour of the Duhallow Way.



Rita O'Flynn, Kay Deady & Bridie O'Connor on the Mullaghareirk Mountains taking part in the National Trails Day.

Long Distance and Looped Walks

Duhallow is home to 35km of the Duhallow Way, part of the European E8 Trans Europe Walkway which offers a contrast of wild bog, mountain, forest, roadways, glens, lakes, rivers and stretches of beautiful isolation. Established as one of the first LEADER projects in 1992, it has been upgraded and maintained to the highest national standard. Duhallow also has six looped walks encompassing the Source of the Blackwater, Mount Hillary and the Mullaghareirk Mountains.

Millstreet Country Park

Millstreet Country Park opened its gates to the public in 1995 and since that time has attracted 1.5 million visitors to the Duhallow area, creating employment for 6 full time staff and up to 20 at the height of the tourist season. Developed with assistance from the first LEADER programme this is one of our flagship projects. The 200 hectare park is a showcase not to be missed.



This showpiece at Millstreet Country Park is a replica of the original Mont des Arts in Brussels.



The vastness of Millstreet Country Park with its waterfalls, lakes, archaeology and gardens set in a spectacular landscape is enhanced by 700 Red Deer.

Tourism and Culture

Preserving our Heritage and Culture

The western part of Duhallow known as Sliabh Luachra, is recognised as the bedrock of traditional Irish music, song, dance and poetry. The Sliabh Luachra Summer School is run by Rockchapel Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann branch at its LEADER funded centre in Bruach Na Carraige. The summer school promotes the distinctive Sliabh Luachra style of music. The new LEADER programme has provided support to organise master classes for the best students from the summer schools and to develop a traditional group who would give first class performances of the Sliabh Luachra music, song and dance.



The Pineland Fiddle Players from Waterville, Maine USA who spent a day at a music workshop in Bruach na Carraige Rockchapel and joined local young musicians (back row) for an evening of music.

Kanturk Arts Festival

The Kanturk Arts Festival is a new initiative which will help to shape the cultural identity of the Kanturk area and celebrate and promote the arts and culture in the region. Kanturk and District Community Council established a sub committee to develop a stage for the festival. LEADER funding was provided to purchase display equipment and materials for the event which featured the work of over 420 artists from Kanturk and the wider Duhallow Region.



Tom Daly Director Kanturk Arts Festival with invited artists, James Clancy, Photographer and Marie Foley, Sculptor.



Noreen Twohig, Arts Festival Committee with Clare Murphy, Overall Winner of the Art Competition.



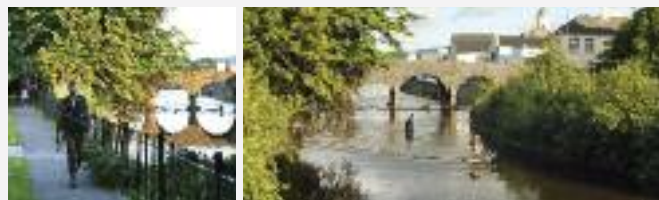
Coldiste Treasa students perform at the opening of the Arts Festival.



Vincent Crotty, invited artist with Patricia Winters and Catherine Keneally.



The Foley family from left, Mary, Sinead, Catriona & Niall at the Kanturk Arts Festival Exhibition.



Brian O'Sullivan, Dan Dennehy, Mick Kelleher and Tom Lofts, members of Kanturk Angling Club at work on the River Dallow as part of their weekly clean up.

Millstreet Pipe Band

Founded in 1951 Millstreet Pipe Band celebrates 58 years of devoted service to the community this year. This band has performed the width and breadth of Ireland and further afield with familiar music and marching columns in distinctive costumes. The highlights of the band over the years are many and this year marks its 50th year leading the Rose of Tralee Festival Parade.



Millstreet Pipe Band leading a parade; celebrates 58 years of devoted service to the community.

Centenary of the Infant Jesus Sisters

The Centenary Committee of the Infant Jesus Sisters received LEADER support to produce a DVD and a book to celebrate the Centenary of the arrival of the Infant Jesus Sisters from France to Drishane, Millstreet in 1909. This project documents a major part of history as described in the book and DVD. The order was successful in targeting Ireland as a recruitment ground for English speaking nuns to work in the new colonies. The Sisters played an important role in the education of girls who would otherwise not have received second level education and in driving economic development in the area. Over 600 young women joined the religious order and emigrated to the Far East and other colonies to set up schools and hospitals to educate, recruit and train indigenous nuns who carry on the work in these locations today.



Local children depicting through dance and movement the story of the Blessed Nicolas Barre, founder of the Infant Jesus Sisters, Drishane at the Infant Jesus Ireland Centenary Celebrations in the Green Glens.

Duhallow Choral Society

The Duhallow Choral Society was established in 1996 to promote culture and music in the region. To date it has trained 200 people in choral singing. The choir has over the years performed at a variety of events both nationally and internationally. Membership of the group is now at 70 dedicated members who train weekly. Achievements of the group include performing at the European Parliament, New York, Germany, Rome & Spain. The Choir also launched their own CD. The Duhallow Choral Society recently benefited from LEADER funding towards the purchase of uniforms and instruments.



Duhallow Choral Society singing at Easter Sunday Mass for Cardinal William Levada who was visiting his ancestral home in Kilcorney. The Choir also met Cardinal Levada at the Vatican in Rome.

IRD Duhallow FÁS Community Employment Scheme



PADDY O'CONNOR Supervisor

Paddy has been the CE Supervisor for IRD Duhallow for eight years and has a wealth of experience in dealing with participants. As part of the Community Development Team, Paddy has responsibility for supervising the eighteen participants on the scheme as well as for liaising with the communities where the work is carried out. His role as supervisor

allows him to identify the needs of participants in the first instance in terms of training and further development and also the needs of the community. He works closely with the Employment and Training Officer in enduring maximum progression for participants using the Job centre.



Elizabeth O'Sullivan, CE Participant sets up Banteer Community Centre for Bingo.

Operation of CE

The number of community groups and facilities in the area requiring assistance from the IRD Duhallow Community Employment Scheme is always on the rise. With the downturn in the economy, many Duhallow locals have lost their jobs and have found themselves in a position which they may never have been in before in their lives.

Because many have held the

same jobs for years, particularly in the manufacturing industry, the importance of CE in providing work experience and training has come to the fore. IRD Duhallow could run a second scheme at present with the number of people on our waiting list. We have written to the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment outlining the valuable work experience that we could offer potential participants should the regulations of CE be relaxed and the scheme permitted to work side by side with other schemes. We feel that now is the time to provide work experience that will ultimately place participants in key positions to access real job opportunities in the Duhallow region in the future. With the Warmer Homes Scheme, Duhallow Community Food Services, Duhallow Area Rural Transport, IRD Duhallow Afterschools and Out of School Service and the Furniture Restoration Project in the pipeline, IRD Duhallow is ideally placed to offer a CE scheme with a wide variety of work experience, on the job training and the opportunity to mix with people on a number of different schemes.

IRD Duhallow's CE Scheme

At present a number of scheme participants are employed as administrators in crèches, caretakers in local Community Centres, GAA pitches and Park Attendants for local Town Parks and Green Areas.

Our current scheme employs eighteen participants who work across the communities of Boherbue, Ballydaly, Kilcorney, Banteer, Lyre,

Dromtariffe and Rathcoole.

The aim of CE is to enhance the employability of disadvantaged and unemployed people by providing opportunities for them to engage in useful temporary work within their communities while



Michael O'Driscoll and Leonard Leader planting new shrubs and trees in Boherbue.



Mary O'Brien at work in Boherbue Community Childcare Facility. Mary is undertaking Fetac Level 5 Childcare as part of the scheme.

they prepare to return to mainstream employment. The scheme aids participants regain their confidence in themselves and their ability to work. A secondary function of CE is to provide much needed resources for local villages and their facilities. Due to the increasing demands on the scheme from unemployed people, we applied to FÁS

for extra places on our current scheme.

However, we were not successful and so we have to work within our existing numbers for the moment.



Pat Moynihan cuts the grass at Rathcoole football pitch

Participant Development through Training

Training and retraining is vital for participants in these turbulent economic times. The supervisor strives to identify the training needs of each participant and through the Job Centre, works towards the identified needs of local employers in order to achieve the ultimate aim of the CE Scheme – to place those who complete their CE term in employment or further training.

Training is a major part of the CE scheme and so each year all participants avail of a variety of flexible training opportunities. The introduction of the crèches in Banteer and Boherbue into the IRD Duhallow CE scheme is working very well, with the participants progressing through training in Childcare at FETAC Level 5.

The specific training completed so far this year includes Rigid Truck lessons and driving test, Safe pass, ECDL, Occupational First Aid, Personal Development, Mobile Elevation Work Platforms, Word Processing, Children with Special Needs, Beginners Computer Course, as well as project courses in Manual Handling, Fire Safety Awareness and Basic Emergency First Aid



Denis Murphy cuts the grass in Ballydaly Church Grounds.



Michael Shine, CE Participant strimming the bank at Dromtariffe pitch.